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AFGHANISTAN HITS SEVERAL SITES IN PAKISTAN IN RETALIATION

Afghanistan's defence ministry said on Saturday that its forces hit several sites inside Pakistan in retaliation for airstrikes earlier this week

19 PAKISTANI SOLDIERS KILLED, CLAIMS MEDIA

Taliban defence ministry said its forces targeted Pakistani points that served as centres and hideouts for malicious elements and their supporters who organised and coordinated attacks in Afghanistan. Media outlet *Hurriyet Daily News* citing ministry officials said that 19 Pakistani troops and three Afghan civilians were killed in the assaults | P11

AFGHANS IN KHOST CITY STAGE PROTEST

- Earlier this week, Pakistan's attack on Afghanistan had killed 46 people in airstrikes near the border in Paktika. Pakistan accused the Taliban of not doing enough to combat cross-border militant activity
- In Khost city, hundreds of Afghan citizens on Saturday protested the Pakistani attack, calling for accountability for civilian deaths

383

PAKISTANI SOLDIERS KILLED IN VARIOUS CLASHES IN 2024

CHENNAI ▪ MADURAI ▪ VIJAYAWADA ▪ BENGALURU ▪ KOCHI ▪ HYDERABAD ▪ VISAKHAPATNAM ▪ COIMBATORE ▪ KOZHIKODE ▪ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM ▪ BELAGAVI ▪ BHUBANESWAR ▪ SHIVAMOGGA ▪ MANGALURU ▪ TIRUPATI ▪ TIRUCHY ▪ TIRUNELVELI ▪ SAMBALPUR ▪ HUBBALLI ▪ DHARMAPURI ▪ KOTTAYAM ▪ KANNUR ▪ VILLUPURAM ▪ KOLLAM ▪ TADEPALLIGUDEM ▪ NAGAPATTINAM ▪ THRISSUR ▪ KALABURAGI

President Droupadi Murmu pays her last respects to former prime minister Manmohan Singh during the state funeral at Nigambodh Ghat in New Delhi on Saturday | PTI

Cremation over, political row over memorial isn't

Congress, BJP slugfest over last rites at Nigambodh Ghat in Delhi

PREETHA NAIR @New Delhi

HOURS after the cremation of Manmohan Singh on Saturday, political tussle over a memorial for him escalated after Congress leader Rahul Gandhi accused the government of "total insult" of the former prime minister since his last rites were performed at Delhi's Nigambodh Ghat instead of a designated burial site.

In a post on X, the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha said, "The great son of Mother India and the first Prime Minister of the Sikh community, Dr Manmohan Singh ji, has been insulted by the present government by performing his last rites today at the Nigam Bodh Ghat."

Wayanad MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, too, attacked the government saying the Centre should have thought 'beyond politics and narrow-mindedness' in this matter. "By not providing an adequate place for the cremation of former PM Dr Manmohan Singh, the government has not done justice to the dignity of the post of former PM, the personality of Manmohan Singh, his legacy and the self-respecting Sikh community," she wrote on X.

In his pushback, BJP spokesperson Sambit Patra lit into Rahul for politicising the issue, saying the Centre has already written to Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and Dr Singh's family conveying the Union Cabinet's decision to allocate space for the memorial. A government statement said the funeral could be held as the process of setting up a trust and allotting land for the memorial could take a while.

Kharge had on Friday written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi requesting to hold the funeral at a place where his memorial could be built.

BJP president J P Nadda, too condemned Rahul and Kharge for politics in the name of memorial. "When the entire nation mourns the demise, the Congress is busy turning this moment of grief into an opportunity to fulfill their political agenda," Nadda alleged.

Congress leader K C Venugopal hit back at Nadda and the BJP, alleging they crossed all boundaries of decency. The "shoddy arrangements and the conduct of the cremation were deeply insulting", he charged. P9

> **Dr Manmohan Singh deserves our highest respect and a memorial. The government should have shown respect to this great son of the country and his proud community** — Rahul Gandhi, Congress leader

FINAL JOURNEY TO NIGAMBODH GHAT

Singh's body, placed in a flower-bedecked casket and carriage, was taken from his 3, Motilal Nehru residence in Delhi to the Congress HQ. Final journey then started from the AICC office to the Nigambodh Ghat, where the procession reached around 11.30 am

ELDEST DAUGHTER LIGHTS PYRE

The funeral pyre was lit by Manmohan Singh's eldest daughter, Upinder Singh, at Nigambodh Ghat. Priests and family members recited religious hymns from the holy *Gurbani*. Chants of *Satnam Waheguru* filled the air, as Singh was cremated

BHUTAN KING PAYS TRIBUTES TO EX-PM

Security forces gave a salute of three volleys of small arms. Buglers sounded the *Last Post*. King of Bhutan Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck and the foreign minister of Mauritius, Dhananjay Ramful, were among the foreign dignitaries who paid tributes to Singh

Kashmiriyat on display amid first big snowfall

FAYAZ WANI @ Srinagar

PEOPLE in the Valley showed what *Kashmiriyat* is all about by opening their homes and mosques to tourists stranded at different places following the season's first major snowfall.

The Valley witnessed the season's first major snowfall on Friday. While the plains had moderate to heavy snowfall, the upper reaches, including tourist resorts of Gulmarg in north Kashmir, Sonamarg in central Kashmir and Pahalgam in south Kashmir experienced heavy snowfall.

As a result, tourists were stranded at many places, including at Gund in central Kashmir, Tangmarg in north Kashmir and Pahalgam and other areas in south Kashmir.

Locals rose to the occasion in the Gund area of Ganderbal district by offering shelter to the stranded tourists at their homes and mosques. They were also provided food and heating facilities. At the Jamia Masjid in Gund, the locals burnt the traditional *hamam* at night to ensure warmth for the tourists accommodated in the mosque.

Videos of the tourists spending the night in the mosque and at the houses of locals have gone viral on social media. "We stayed the night in the mosque in Gund. The locals have given new life to us by providing us food and heating arrangements in the mosque. People here are very hospitable. They looked after us very well," said a group of tourists from Punjab.

"We are extremely thankful to the locals. The tourists are safe here and no harm can come their way. People should visit Kashmir which is paradise on earth," they added.

Besides, hotelier Mohd Altaf Siah provided free accommodation to tourists at his hotel, The Sultan, at Kullan-Rezan in Sonamarg from 2.30 am.

A visitor takes photos at Dal Lake after the season's first snowfall in Srinagar

RAPE, HONEY TRAP CASE: 2K-PAGE CHARGESHEET AGAINST MUNIRATHNA

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

THE Special Investigation Team (SIT) on Friday submitted a 2,481-page chargesheet in the rape and honey trap case registered against Rajarajeshwari Nagar BJP MLA Munirathna to the special court here.

A 40-year-old social worker filed a complaint against the MLA at Kaggalipura police station on September 18.

The chargesheet alleges that the MLA used women living with HIV to honey trap his political rivals.

Ayyan Reddy, police inspector attached to Hebbagodi police station, has been named in the chargesheet for allegedly helping the MLA in criminal conspiracies.

The SIT has mentioned 146 witnesses and 850 documents as evidence in the chargesheet. Of the 146 witnesses, statements of eight have been recorded before a magistrate.

Several videos allegedly used by Munirathna to honey trap his rivals have been recovered. Apart from Munirathna and Iyyan Reddy, MLA's associates Srinivas P and Sudhakar R have been named in the chargesheet.

The SIT is investigating three cases — two registered at Vyalikaval police station in Bengaluru and one at Kaggalipura police station in Ramanagara district.

On November 30, the SIT submitted a 590-page chargesheet against the MLA for his alleged casteist slurs against a former corporator.

6 Roerich works for Delhi expo to mark his 150th birth anniv

BOSKY KHANNA @Bengaluru

SIX paintings of renowned Russian painter and philosopher Nicholas K Roerich were moved from Bengaluru's Chitrakala Parishath (CKP) to New Delhi's National Gallery for Modern Art (NGMA) last week.

They will be part of the works on display to mark the 150th birth anniversary of Roerich. The six paintings — part of the Himalayan series — were hand-picked by curators of NGMA and CKP.

This is the first time that Nicholas Roerich's paintings have been taken out of the gallery here, BL Shankar, CKP president, told TNSE.

CKP houses 36 paintings of Nicholas Roerich and 63 by his son Svetoslav Roerich. Of them, six of Nicholas' paintings have been sent to New Delhi.

"They will be on display at NGMA for three months from January 15. A gallery at CKP will display 35 unique paintings of the Himalayan series from mid-January," Shankar said.

Shankar said the CKP gallery, which was closed for renovation, is being opened after a long time. Some of Roerich's paintings had to be restored.

CONTINUED ON: P2

Kolar farmer distributes bananas free as prices crash

V VELAYUDHAM @ Kolar

A farmer, who had cultivated banana on three acres of land, harvested the crop on Saturday and distributed it to people free of cost owing to the fall in prices of the produce.

KY Ganesh Gowda of Kotekanahalli in Kolar district took this step after local wholesale merchants and fruit dealers offered him only Rs 10 a kg of banana.

Gowda told TNSE that last year, he took a loan of Rs 2 lakh from Vadagur Society and planted 2006 Elakki banana suckers on his land a few months ago. In all, he spent Rs 4.5 lakh on the crop.

During Ganesh Chaturthi, Deepavali and Varamahalakshmi festivals, local dealers purchased bananas from him for Rs 60 a kg and they, in turn, sold them for Rs 100 a kg. Although he tried to sell 2,000 kg of bananas this week, the buyers did not offer him remunerative prices. As the crop was ready for harvest, he could not wait anymore, he said.

Banana stalks on KY Ganesh Gowda's land at Kotekanahalli in Kolar district | EXPRESS

"With no other go, I engaged some labourers and harvested the crop and distributed it to people of Kotekanahalli and nearby villages free of cost," he said.

Gowda said that he took to banana cultivation after incurring losses by growing tomatoes last year. "I have spent Rs 35,000 on harvesting the crop and preparing the land for another crop. Apart from clearing the loan, I have to spend money on raising a new crop," he said.

According to sources, many farmers have taken up banana cultivation in the district, expecting remunerative prices during Sankranthi next month.

Putin says sorry for Azerbaijani plane crash

AGENCIES

VLADIMIR Putin obliquely admitted on Saturday that Russian air defence had by mistake shot down an Azerbaijani Airlines plane that tried to land in Grozny before crashing, breaking the Kremlin's silence as speculation mounted over Russian culpability.

The Russian leader called his Azerbaijani counterpart Ilham Aliyev, apologising for the shocking error of judgement in Russian airspace, while stopping short of saying Russian air defence had shot it down.

The phone call between the allies came three days after the plane flying from Baku to Grozny crashed in Kazakhstan, killing 38 people of 67 onboard. President Putin told Aliyev the plane had tried to land in Grozny "several times."

"During this time, Grozny, (the town of) Mozdok and Vladikavkaz were being attacked by Ukrainian combat drones and Russian air defence was repelling these attacks," Putin said.

The European Union called for a swift, independent international investigation. P11

FOURTH TEST

Reddy, steady, go: Emotional hundred saves India at MCG

GOMESH S @ Melbourne

IT was tense. It was emotional. The scenes had all the ingredients of a blockbuster Tollywood movie. The protagonist on the field was plying his trade. Enacting one of India's greatest fightbacks. The celebrations too had sprinkling of movies.

Nitish Kumar Reddy first imitated the famous gesture from the movie *Pushpa* after completing his fifty and later when he reached his maiden Test hundred it was Bahubali scene. India were still on the ropes, but thanks to Reddy and Washington Sundar, India can at least breathe with ease at 358 for 9 in reply to Australia's first innings' 474.

In the stands were his family members sobbing. Father Mutyala Reddy and his wife were in attendance. Sometime later, Mutyala, his wife and daughter were waiting eagerly for the hotel door to open. Just as the door opened and the 21-year-old centurion emerged, Nitish's mum embraced her son. Even though she tried to control, his sister hugged him saying, "so proud, so happy."

The most emotional moment was that of Mutyala who buried his face in Nitish's shoulders and cried. He has sacrificed a lot. Even gave up his job so that he could ferry his son from practice to home. He even faced criticism for not having a job. But he had faith in Nitish. As the father kissed his son and hugged him tight in the video shared by BCCI.tv, they lived a dream. The Andhra all-rounder (from Vizag), with his unbeaten 105, saved the day for India.

It was MSK Prasad, former India selector, who spotted him in the early 2010s. He used to be a top-order batter bowling seam-up for Andhra age-group cricket. If Prasad played his part, Hanuma Vihari, (2021 Border Gavaskar Trophy team-member), too had a hand in helping Nitish make his state debut as a teenager. "Vihari always came forward and groomed him. I feel that Vihari has got the knack of supporting the right talent," Prasad tells this daily.

Vihari credits the youngster and his family for what he has done. "I always thought he would be playing at this level. But coming so soon and being able to perform in Australia is unbelievable. I felt really emotional today," Vihari said. P13

ALMANAC TODAY
• **Sunday:** 29.12.2024 • **Year:** Krodhi • **Ayana:** Dakshinayana
• **Ritu:** Himantha • **Masa:** Margashira • **Paksha:** Krishna • **Tithi:** Chaturdashi 3.19 am
• **Nakshatra:** Jyeshta 11.13 pm • Moon in Dhanur Rashi • **Rahukaala:** 04:30 pm to 06:00 pm
• **Gulikakala:** 03:00 pm to 04:30 pm • **Yamaganda:** 12:00 pm to 01:30 pm

WEATHER
MIN 16°C | MAX 28°C
FORECAST
Afternoon clouds

Sunrise 06.40 am
Sunset 06.03 pm
Moonrise 05.06 am
Moonset 04.34 pm

USHERING IN 2025

ELABORATE SECURITY MEASURES IN CITY FOR NY CELEBRATIONS

MG Road Metro station to stay shut for boarding after 11 pm on Dec 31, flyovers out of bounds

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

TO avoid stampede at the MG Road Metro Station after New Year celebrations, the city police in coordination with BMRCL officials, have decided to close the station for boarding on Tuesday night. Passengers will only be allowed to alight at the station, while those wishing to board must use either Cubbon Park or Trinity Metro stations.

Speaking to the media about security arrangements for New Year's eve, City Police Commissioner B Dayananda said public celebrations will be permitted only with prior government approval, and events can be held only until 1 am. All flyovers, except the one leading to Kempegowda International Airport (KIA), will be shut after 11 pm on Tuesday and will reopen at 6 am on Wednesday. On KIA Road, two-wheelers are prohibited from 10 pm on Tuesday to 6 am on Wednesday.

A total of 11,830 police personnel, including both law enforcement, traffic police, home guards, and civil defence staff, will be deputed to maintain order and prevent untoward incidents during the celebrations. Major locations will be inspected with the help of sniffer dogs and 16 anti-sabotage check teams. Additionally, 817 CCTV cameras, 63 watch towers, 114 women safety island, 48 police kiosks and 54 health centres will be operational across all eight divisions. Besides, towing vehicles will be used to tow away vehicles parked in no-parking zones.

"Drone cameras will monitor key locations, while 89 Karnataka State Reserve Police (KSRP) platoons and 23 City Armed Reserve (CAR) platoons will be deployed. On the other hand, 70 drug peddlers including three foreign nationals have been arrested and drugs worth about Rs 25 crore have been seized," Dayananda said.

Special women's safety zones staffed with women police officers have been established at key locations. Police kiosks will provide assistance for issues such as missing children, theft complaints or emergencies. Vehicular traffic on Brigade Road will be restricted, allowing one-way pedestrian entry through door frame metal detectors at designated locations. Security has also been intensified in high-traffic areas such as Koramangala, Indiranagar, Marathahalli, HRBR Layout, Airport Road and Whitefield with four DCPs, six ACPs, 18 police inspectors, and 2414 personnel on duty.

Joint Commissioner of Traffic MN Anucheth emphasised that strict action will be taken against those caught driving under the influence of alcohol. Pub owners have also been directed to maintain a register, with the names, contact details and addresses of customers.

NO ENTRY

MG Road
From Anil Kumble Circle to Residency Road near Mayo Hall

Brigade Road
From Cauvery Emporium Junction to Opera Junction

Church Street
From Brigade Road to Museum Road

Museum Road
From MG Road to Old Madras Road Junction

Rest House Road
From Museum Road to Brigade Road

Residency Cross Road
From Residency Road to MG Road (Shankar Nag theatre)

NO PARKING

MG Road
From Anil Kumble Circle to Trinity Circle

PARKING PLACES

Shivajinagar BMTC shopping complex first floor

UB City

Garuda Mall

Cubbon Park (Bal Bhavan)

Traffic advisory

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

THE city traffic police announced traffic restrictions and parking bans in the Central Business District (CBD) to ensure smooth conduct of New Year celebrations. Movement of vehicle will be prohibited and parking will be banned on MG Road, Brigade Road, Church Street, St Mark's Road, Rest House Road and Residency Road during the intervening night of Tuesday and Wednesday. Entry to these roads will be restricted to police and essential service vehicles from 8 pm on Tuesday to 2 am on Wednesday. Parking restrictions will be in place from 4 pm on Tuesday till 3 am on Wednesday. Additionally, only unidirectional movement will be permitted for visitors on these roads. To facilitate public transport, authorities have held discussions with taxi aggregators to ensure services from areas expected to witness large gatherings. Surge in prices will also invite trouble for the taxi aggregators.

FOR LOVE OF KANNADA

Founder-chairperson of Infosys Dr Sudha Murty at the launch of 69 Kannada books to mark 69th Kannada Rajyotsava at Gandhi Bhavan In Bengaluru | ALLEN EGENUSE J

Free Jaipur foot camp from Jan 3-9

Bengaluru: Rotary Bangalore Peenya and Bhagwan Mahaveer Viklang Sahayatha Samiti is set to organise its 27th free mega Jaipur foot fitment programme from January 3-9 at Ganesh Bagh, near Shivajinagar bus stand. Artificial limb and calipers will be tailored to the exact measurement of beneficiaries. Besides, tricycles, crutches, artificial hand (LN 4 Fore Hand), wheel chairs will be provided at the for the needy. Those interested to take part are requested to bring 3 copies of their Aadhaar and UDID (Unique Disability ID) cards.

Chitra Santhe to be held on Jan 5

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

THE upcoming 22nd edition of Chitra Santhe will be held both online and offline. The offline art exhibit will be held on January 5 and will be inaugurated by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar. This is the first time a hybrid exhibition model is being adopted post Covid, said director of Chitrakala Parishath, BL Shankar on Saturday.

The online Santhe will continue for a month, enabling artists to showcase their works, interact with art lovers and sell their products.

In the offline Santhe, artists can display 10 pieces at a time on their wall for citizens to chose from. This year, this is not open for international artists.

Of the 3,177 applications CKP received from 22 states, 1,420 paintings were selected. Of this, 189 artists are senior citizens, 152 specially-abled, 292 hobbyists, 769 professional and 18 from art institutions.

The exhibition will stretch from Windsor Manor Hotel to Shivananda Circle and a part of Crescent Road. Additional stalls will also be put up in Seva Dal grounds exclusively for senior citizens.

Shankar admitted that owing to logistical issues, the number of artists have been limited this year. "Once Chitra Santhe concludes, a committee will be constituted to discuss other possible locations, where it can be held to accommodate more people. We are open to suggestions from people but we have limited space. Around 3-4 lakh people participated last year and we expect around 5 lakh people this time. Last year, there were sales worth Rs 3 crore and this year we are also expecting the same and more," he said.

Speaking about this year's theme -- Girl Child -- Shankar said, CKP aims to create awareness about the challenges and abuses faced by girls. Special decorations displaying the Preamble of the Indian Constitution along with art works of serving and retired staffers will be displayed. "Chitra Sammana awards will be given to five senior artists from Karnataka on January 4 under five categories - D Devaraj Urs, Nagaratnamma, Y Subramanya Raju, HK Kejriwal and M Aryamurthy awards," he said.

> **Once Chitra Santhe concludes, a committee will be constituted to discuss other possible locations, where it can be held to accommodate more people**
>
> - BL Shankar, CKP Director

HIGHLIGHTS

- Chitra Santhe will be held from 9 am to 9 pm on January 5
- Online Santhe to continue for a month
- Over 1,420 artists from 22 states will showcase their works
- ATM, food courts, mobile toilet arrangements will be done
- CCTV cameras will be installed at dedicated places
- Feeder bus services arranged from Majestic Metro station, Mantri Mall Metro Station, Vidhana Soudha Metro Station to Shivananda Circle on Jan 5
- Art works at Chitra Santhe range from Rs 100 to several lakhs
- Booths for family photos, caricatures, cartoon drawings and many more
- Mysuru, Tanjore, Rajasthani, Madhubani style art works, along with modern, contemporary, water colour, acrylic, pencil, ink, drawings, graphic media works and other genres and styles will be on display and sales
- Cultural performances by students from College of Fine Arts and Bangalore School of Visual Arts to be held

NICE-10 route complete's a year, fetches ₹1 cr profit

> **Initially, around 60,000 passengers travelled on this route every month. The figure has now surged to over 3 lakh, making it one of BMTC's most popular routes**
>
> BMTC Official

AKNISREE KARTHIK @Bengaluru

THE Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation's (BMTC) NICE-10 route has gained significant popularity among commuters, generating Rs 1 crore in monthly revenue for the bus corporation. Officially launched by Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy on December 23 last year, the route recently completed its first anniversary.

The NICE-10 route operates between Madavara NICE Road Junction (BIEC) on Tumakuru Road and Electronics City on Hosur Road. En route, it stops at NICE Road junctions at Magadi Road, Mysuru Road, Kanakapura Road and Bannerghatta Road, towards its destination at Electronics City.

"There are hundreds of people who commute daily to Electronics City for work. Many of them board from Madavara, Nelamangala and areas around Tumakuru Road. Before the introduction of the BMTC bus service, people were dependent on private cabs, trucks and vans. However with increasing demand, BMTC introduced the NICE-10 buses at the end of last year," said an official from BMTC.

Further, he also said that the route gradually picked up pace by word of mouth and Whatsapp groups. Initially, around 60,000 passengers travelled on this route monthly. The figure has now surged to over 3 lakh passengers, marking its success as one of BMTC's most popular routes.

Buses on this route operate at a frequency of 10 minutes with 21 schedules. The first bus starts as early as 6 am and the last bus at 9 pm, the bus corporation said.

The bus corporation introduces new bus routes targeting new areas, residential layouts, Metro stations and other areas based on the demand. Of the newly introduced routes, around 70 per cent run successfully while the 30 per cent witness poor patronage. BMTC aims to modify these specific routes.

Tataguni Estate to become tourism destination

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

THEY have been restored with the help of experts from Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH).

The paintings were moved to New Delhi a week in advance and special arrangements are being made for their display, which need at least 10 days, Shankar said.

More than 128 paintings of Roerich are at Devika Rani and Roerich Estate, also known as Tataguni Estate, on Kanakapura Road. This estate has been selected by the Union government to be developed as a tourist destination.

The Union and state governments, with the help of experts from CKP, are working towards making it an eco-tourism destination. Inputs from Roerich and Devika Rani Estate Board and the Russian government are also being taken for the purpose.

CRIME FILES

K'TAKA GRABBED ATTENTION FOR ALL WRONG REASONS

RAKSHITH GOWDA @Bengaluru

2024 was one of the busiest years for law enforcing agencies with the Rameshwaram Cafe blast in Whitefield, sensational Renukaswamy murder allegedly involving actor Darshan and alleged sexual exploitation and kidnapping by former minister and JDS MLA HD Revanna and his two sons Prajwal and Suraj.

More high and mighty followed with criminal cases registered against Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Union Ministers Niramala Sitharaman and HD Kumaraswamy, former chief minister BS Yeddyurappa, former minister Munirathna and director and professors of the premier IIM-Bangalore.

The year also witnessed some of the worst scams where crores of rupees were reportedly misused. B Nagendra, who was a minister for Scheduled Tribes Welfare, had to resign after his name cropped up in the alleged misappropriation of funds in Valmiki ST Welfare Corporation.

Criminal cases were registered against Siddaramaiah's wife Parvati and her brother in the MUDA case. Yediyurappa landed in trouble after a POCSO case was registered against him by the Sadashivanagar police. Former minister in the BJP government Munirathna was arrested in an alleged rape case.

The city for the first time witnessed a Delhi type of crime where a 29-year-old woman, Mahalakshmi, was murdered, her body was chopped into 59 pieces and was stuffed inside a refrigerator in Vyalikaval police limits. Her lover Mukti Ray, who was suspected to have committed the crime, died by suicide at his hometown in Odisha before the police could track him down.

Finish Lille 2024

The suicide of 34-year-old techie Atul Subhash in Marathahalli police limits grabbed national attention as he had left behind a 24-page death note and also a 90-minute video, alleging harassment by his wife and in-laws. His wife and two others were arrested from Uttar Pradesh and Haryana.

The number of cyber crimes also increased to over 22,000 cases in the state during the year. So much so that every one in four cases is a cyber crime now.

In a heart-rending incident, a probationary IPS officer, 26-year-old Harsh Bardhan, died in an accident while on his way to Hassan to take charge of his first posting.

Alleged misappropriation of funds during Covid came to haunt the opposition BJP as a first FIR was registered by the Vidhana Soudha police following a complaint by the chief accounts officer of the Directorate of Medical Education. BJP MLA CT Ravi landed in trouble over his alleged derogatory remark against Minister Laxmi Hebbalkar at Suvarna Vidhana Soudha in Belagavi during the just-concluded joint legislature session.

A 27-year-old woman from Uzbekistan Zarina Utkirovna was murdered at a hotel by its housekeeping staff on Sankey Road. Murder of 23-year-old Neha Hiremath by her former classmate Fayaz Khondunaik at BVB College of Engineering and Technology in Hubballi shook the state. Gadag town witnessed a ghastly 'supari' murder of four family members by a relative and his associates over property.

The tragic death of director and CEO of a software company, 48-year-old Chandram Yegapagol, and five members of his family in Nelamangala traffic limits after a container truck fell on their SUV was one of the major accidents the state witnessed.

When scams, dastardly crimes shook state

Explosion at The Rameshwaram Cafe: Peace in the bustling Brookfield area of Bangalore's Whitefield was shattered when a low-intensity 'Improvised Explosive Device'(IED) went off on the afternoon of March 1 in Rameshwaram Cafe, driving customers helter skelter. The image of the suspect who placed the IED in a corner of the restaurant was captured on CCTV. The case had internal security ramifications and was rightly handed over to the National Investigation Agency. After the investigation, a chargesheet was filed against Abdul Matheen Ahmed Tahaa, Mussafir Husein Shazib, Maaz Munir Ahmed and Muzammil Shariff. Fortunately, no one died but nine persons were injured.

Alleged serial molestation and rape: In April, several pen drives were distributed in Hassan district and made available at random public places, containing videos of molestation and rape of women. The accused in the rape and molestation is Prajwal Revanna, scion of the Deve Gowda clan and former MP. The state government constituted a Special Investigation Team to investigate two rape cases and a case of kidnapping. Earlier, he flew to Germany immediately after the elections, but was arrested on his arrival at the Bangalore airport and he has since been under judicial custody. There are uncorroborated reports that serial rape and molestation under duress were committed at various locations against different women, young and not so young, some of them married with children.

Murder most foul: The alleged gruesome murder preceded by kidnapping and unspeakable torture of Renukaswamy by Kannada film star Darshan, his friend Pavithra Gowda and their henchmen came as a shocker. The crime came to light when an unidentified dead body was discovered by a security guard near a storm water drain on June 9 at Sumanahalli, Bengaluru. As many as 17 accused, including Darshan and Pavithra, were arrested and sent to judicial custody. The High Court granted bail to seven accused, including Darshan and Pavithra, on December 13.

Valmiki Corporation scam: The Karnataka Maharshi Valmiki Scheduled Tribes Development Corporation is meant for the development of Scheduled Tribes community in Karnataka. The scam came to light from the suicide note left behind by its Superintendent P Chandrashekhar where he exposed corruption involving several officials. Project funds aggregating to Rs 8.8 crore were transferred to an unauthorised account in the Union Bank, MG Road branch, Bengaluru. On February 26, 2024, the bank transferred Rs 88 crore from the corporation's account to different bank accounts with signatures of the Corporation's managing director and accountants. It is believed that the money was transferred to the First Finance Credit Cooperative Society and later transferred online to different accounts. The funds were illegally transferred from the corporation's accounts at the Union Bank of India to multiple accounts, some of which were linked to fictitious entities. The suicide note disclosed embezzlement of Rs 85 crore, naming the MD of the corporation and others. CBI has stepped in to investigate the case. The minister for ST welfare B Nagendra resigned. The houses of Nagendra were raided by the Enforcement Directorate. He was also arrested. The scam amount is said to be of the order of Rs 94.73 crore. Nagendra used to be a close associate of Janardhan Reddy and Sriramulu of BJP who were involved in the infamous mining scam of Ballari.

STRAMESH
Former Director General and Inspector General of Police

Dismembered body: The bone-chilling murder of a Nepali girl, Mahalakshmi, in her house in Vyalikaval, Bengaluru bore an eerie resemblance to the Shraddha Walkar case of New Delhi, two years ago. Unable to live with the burden of guilt, the accused Mukti Ray died by suicide in his Odisha village. Both the deceased were colleagues in a factory and the accused murdered Mahalakshmi in cold blood, cut her body into 59 pieces and stuffed them in her own refrigerator, claiming he could not put up with her harassment. His suicide brings about a closure of sorts to this sordid murder.

Cyber crime: The year 2024 witnessed a frighteningly steep rise in cyber crimes. Many gullible citizens lost their hard-earned money to conmen who would threaten citizens citing fictitious cases against them and empty their bank accounts. The modus operandi included calling random citizens under the guise of tax, enforcement, RBI and telecom regulatory officials. No citizen feels safe from such scams in a world where mobile telephony is omnipresent and omniscient. It is time that the entire Government machinery and the police take proactive steps on a war footing to stop these crimes which have become commonplace. The onus lies particularly on the departments whose names are freely used by fake callers. Making digital space safe for the common person should be a priority.

The forest department has closed booking of cottages in Bandipur forest for Tuesday and Wednesday as New Year revelry will affect wildlife. However, the safari at the Bandipur's forest will function as usual. Private resorts have been warned not to play loud speakers, set up illuminations or any other activity that will disturb wildlife

Drink water, but not in excess, doctors warn

Overconsumption can lead to drop in sodium levels in blood potentially resulting in severe health issues

RISHITA KHANNA @Bengaluru

DRINK plenty of water! This advice is often considered a golden rule for good health, but doctors caution that overhydration can be dangerous and deadly.

Drinking too much water can cause hyponatremia — a condition where sodium levels in the blood drop to dangerously low levels, potentially leading to severe health issues.

Recently, a 40-year-old woman from Hyderabad suffered seizures and lost consciousness after drinking an excessive amount of water in the morning. She was told that it would help flush out toxins, but the result was that she had to spend four days in the ICU, battling complications from water intoxication.

Experts warn that consuming 1.5 liters of water or more per hour can overwhelm the kidneys and upset the body's electrolyte balance and that excessive water is unnecessary for detoxification.

In this case, the woman was advised to drink excessive amounts of water in the morning as it would detoxify her body. She was told that consuming large quantities of water immediately after waking up would flush out all the wastes from her system and rejuvenate her skin, improving her overall health.

Doctors explain that kidneys naturally clear the body toxins through urine. The recommended amount of water intake is 2.5 to 3 litres per day, which should be spread out throughout the day as about

Water intoxication occurs when excessive water consumption exceeds the body's requirements, leading to an imbalance in electrolytes by significantly lowering sodium levels in the blood

Edwina Raj, Head of Services, Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics, Aster CMI Hospital

20% of daily water requirement also comes from food, especially fruits and vegetables, they said.

Edwina Raj, Head of Services, Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics, Aster CMI Hospital, said water intoxication occurs when excessive water consumption exceeds the body's requirements, leading to an imbalance in electrolytes by significantly lowering sodium levels in the blood. This can cause symptoms ranging from mild issues like nausea, vomiting, headaches, sweating, and confusion to severe, life-threatening emergencies such as seizures, coma, or even death.

Edwina highlighted that people with kidney disorders, heart failure, or liver diseases are particularly vulnerable, as their organs may struggle to process fluids, resulting in fluid accumulation.

Dr Nasiruddin G, Consultant-Internal Medicine, Fortis Hospital, stressed that low sodium levels, caused by overhydration, can present symptoms ranging from mild lethargy and confusion to severe cases of altered mental status or even seizures that require ICU care. To prevent such complications, dividing the water intake into regular intervals is a safer and healthier alternative, he said.

Doctors highlight that water intoxication can mimic symptoms of other conditions, making it difficult to diagnose quickly.

If left unchecked, it can progress to seizures, brain swelling, and even coma. Unlike dehydration, which develops over time, the effects of hyponatremia can escalate rapidly, especially when water intake exceeds the kidneys' capacity to process it.

Journalist-turned-politician Balbir Punj greets the gathering at the 7th Atal Bihari Vajpayee memorial lecture in Bengaluru on Saturday | NAGARAJA GADEKAL

Vajpayee, sarva sparshi who touched everyone's hearts, says Balbir Punj

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

IN 2001, during a flight journey, the then prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee insisted on sharing a task that few would expect from a leader of his stature. As journalist-turned-politician Balbir Punj, who was travelling with him, offered to handle the luggage, Vajpayee stopped him and said, "Work should be divided — one time you carry and the next time I will."

A photograph from that moment, which later made its way into every newspaper and magazine, shows Vajpayee, India's tallest leader at the time, carrying the luggage while Punj, former Rajya Sabha MP followed behind.

Recalling this incident during the 7th Atal Bihari Vajpayee memorial lecture organised by Thinkers Forum Karnataka to mark Vajpayee's centenary here on Saturday, Punj said, "That image speaks volumes about his humility and simplicity. Despite his towering stature, he believed in equality even in the smallest actions."

The lecture also took a political turn as Punj strongly criticised Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for his repeated attacks on Veer Savarkar. "Rahul abuses Savarkar, but wants to win Maharashtra. Voh kuch bhi bolta hai — he speaks anything. That's why Congress is where it is today," Punj said.

He contrasted Gandhi's statements with former prime minister Indira Gandhi's recognition of Savarkar as a revolutionary figure. "She called Savarkar a great figure of contemporary India, while Rahul Gandhi has turned the Congress into a mouthpiece for communist ideologies," Punj remarked, pointing to the party's ideological drift.

Punj, who described himself as "nothing special but one of Vajpayee's admirers," shared how his first extended interaction with the leader during a 40-day journalistic assignment left a lasting impact. "He made me feel positive and welcomed. His personality was never intimidating, even though he was already a towering leader," Punj said.

Born on December 25, 1924, Vajpayee shared a lifelong bond with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), which was founded a year later. Punj highlighted this connection, adding that it remained unbroken until Vajpayee's passing in 2018. Reflecting on the loss, he said, "India lost its most powerful voice, BJP its most credible face, and the world a champion of human rights."

Among other anecdotes, Punj recalled how Vajpayee, whom he described as one of the finest Hindi orators the country has produced in the last 100 years, once sent him an apology letter for missing a dinner Punj had planned. Vajpayee not only expressed regret but also invited Punj to meet him at his residence at midnight if possible.

Another moment that defined Vajpayee's calm demeanour was during a private flight that lost its route mid-air. While Punj panicked, Vajpayee remarked, "It's okay. Even if the plane crashes, we'll die together," offering reassurance in the face of uncertainty.

Punj concluded the lecture by describing Vajpayee as a "sarva sparshi"—a man who touched everyone's hearts—and a leader whose legacy continues to inspire the nation.

HC: No need for consent of rape accused for adoption of baby born out of assault

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

QUASHING an endorsement issued by a sub-registrar rejecting an application by a couple for registration of an adoption deed, insisting that they get the consent of the child's biological father, who is a rape accused in jail, the Karnataka High Court has directed the official to register it without any consent.

Justice Hemant Chandangoudar passed the order recently while allowing a petition filed by the 16-year-old victim, mother of the baby to be adopted, her mother and the couple, questioning the endorsement issued on November 11, 2024.

The court noted that the adoption of the child is being done as per the provisions of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, and the Rules, 2016, and Regulation 7(7) of Regulations 2017, which authorises the mother of an illegitimate child to surrender for adoption.

The court said when natural guardians are incapable of providing a loving, safe, and nurturing environment, the child, for all practical purposes, falls within the definition of an "orphan". Failure to give such children in adoption would deprive them of their right to live with dignity, as guaranteed under Article 21. Hence, adoption in such cases is not only a statutory right, but also a moral obligation to ensure the overall welfare and development of the child, the court said.

The petitioners submitted the application along with the adoption deed dated November 11, 2024 to the sub-registrar, who issued the endorsement stating that the application is incomplete as the biological father of the child to be adopted has not been made an executing party.

A primary question before the court is whether the consent of the biological father of a child born out of rape, who is accused of rape is required, in addition to the consent given by the minor victim mother and her guardian for adoption.

The minor victim, who is a Muslim, lodged a complaint in August at a police station in the city for the offences committed between November 1, 2023, to June 20, 2024, under Pocso Act, 2012, and Section 376, 506 and 34 of IPC. She gave birth to a baby girl on September 30, 2024.

CROWD PULLER

A participant guides his buffaloes on a slushy track during Kambala in Mangaluru on Saturday. The eighth edition of the race was flagged off by M Venkatesh, retired executive director of MRPL and father of Capt M V Prajwal, who was martyred in a gunfight with militants in Rajouri, Kashmir | PTI

EXPRESS READ

Man hammers wife to death over family dispute

Bengaluru: A 35-year-old woman was bludgeoned to death with a hammer by her husband over a family dispute, at their house in Medahalli, Attibele, on Saturday afternoon. The Attibele police have arrested the accused. The deceased has been identified as Mallika Katoon, a homemaker and hailing from Bihar. The accused, Mohammed Syed Ansari (40), is a carpenter. The couple have been living in the city for the past 15 years and have three minor children, including two daughters. Around 9.30 am on Saturday, the couple had a heated argument. Later, while Mallika was offering prayers, he struck her on the head with a hammer. She died on the spot. ENS

4 transfer ₹12.5cr from payment firm, nabbed

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

THE East CEN police have arrested four people from Gujarat, including the relationship manager of a private bank there, for cheating a payment company by stealing the accounts data and transferring Rs 12.5 crore using fake Corporate Internet Banking (CIB) forms.

The accused have been identified as Vaibhav, the relationship manager; Sailesh, an employee at the bank, and Neha and Shubham, mule account holders. All are from Rajkot in Gujarat.

The police said the case was registered based on a complaint filed by the director of a payment application whose nodal and current bank accounts were linked to a private bank located in Indiranagar, from where Rs 12.5 crore were transferred illegally. During investigation, the police found that the relationship manager had stolen account details and changed the registered mobile number and email ID. Using fake CIB forms, he and his associates transferred the money to 17 bank accounts in Rajasthan and Gujarat.

The police recovered Rs 1.28 crore in cash as well as freezed Rs 5 lakh in bank accounts.

Accused's plea to discard mentally-ill victim's evidence rejected

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

REJECTING the contention of an accused that the statement of the minor victim of sexual assault cannot be given credence and her evidence in cross-examination should be discarded because she is mentally unsound, the Karnataka High Court refused to quash the criminal proceedings initiated him.

The 48-year-old man from Tumakuru district was booked for allegedly sexual assaulting a 13-year-old mentally ill girl.

"The victim identified the petitioner and narrated, though not in minute detail, about the acts of the petitioner," said Justice M Nagaprasanna while recently rejecting the petition filed by accused Krishnappa against the ongoing criminal proceedings against him under the provisions of IPC and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012. At the same time, the court directed the trial court to conclude the proceedings within an outer limit of three months, if not earlier.

The court observed that considering quashing of the proceedings would become a travesty of law as the petitioner has indulged in sexual perversion beyond the bounds of maturity and sanity. The behaviour of the petitioner cannot but be described to be a paraphiliac, albeit, prima facie. It is not understandable as to how the petitioner seeks quashing of the proceedings basing his foundation on the score of stray answers of a mentally ill child in her cross-examination, the court said.

According to the complaint, on December 10, 2023, the girl was playing in front of the house at 3.15 pm. After around 30 minutes, her mother noticed that her daughter was missing. The woman went in search of her daughter and saw the latter coming out of the house of the petitioner holding her shirt and pant in her hand.

When the mother enquired with her daughter, she was informed that the petitioner on the pretext of giving her sugarcane had taken her to the bathroom of his house and committed sexual assault on her. The woman did not immediately complain as she was apprehensive of her reputation or her daughter's reputation being damaged. But, when the daughter went on repeatedly complaining of experiencing pain in in her private parts, the complainant registered the crime on December 21, 2023.

Cops open fire at dacoit in Dharwad, arrest him

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Dharwad

THE DHARWAD police opened fire on an interstate dacoit who was trying to escape after a failed robbery bid and arrested him, on the outskirts of the city on Saturday morning. Two policemen, including a police sub-inspector, were injured in the incident, and are being treated at KIMS Hospital in Hubballi.

The accused is involved in more than 50 criminal activities. The police are in search of his gang.

Bala Venkateshwar

Police Commissioner N Shashi Kumar said the arrested is identified as Bala Venkateshwar alias Kalyankumar. He and his gang tried to rob a house, but their plan was scuttled when the house owner, Vikas, alerted the police and his neighbour.

Meanwhile, when the police reached the spot, Bala and his gang tried to flee. The police shot at Bala's legs when he was trying to escape. The same gang was involved in a dacoit case which took place six months ago at Sattur.

"It has come to light that the accused is wanted by the police of four different states and four different districts in Karnataka. This is the gang which is associated with the Stuartpuram gang. These gang members are nearly merciless and they even kill people during the robbery," the police commissioner said.

KBNU
KHAJA BANDANAWAZ UNIVERSITY
EDUCATING HUMANITY

RECRUITMENT NOTIFICATION
(Notification No. 13/2024, Dated: 26/12/2024

APPOINTMENT OF NURSING & PARA MEDICAL STAFF

Interview Venue: Hotel Ritz Carlton, Residency Road, Bengaluru.
17th of January 2025 2:00 pm - 7:00 pm.

The Khaja Bandanawaz (KBN) University is a private University established by an Act of the Karnataka State Legislative Assembly in 2018 at Kalaburagi. The Faculty of Medical Sciences of KBN University is looking to hire dedicated NURSING & PARA MEDICAL STAFF for the KBN Teaching and General Hospital, Kalaburagi.

O.T. Technicians (Qualification : B.Sc. OT with 3-5 years of experience)
Lab. Technicians (Qualification : B.Sc. Lab. Tech. with 3-5 years of experience)
Nurses for Intensive Care (Qual. : GNM/B.Sc. Nursing with 3-5 years of exp.)

Experienced candidates will be given preference.
The University offers remunerative pay package and provides housing facilities.

Click https://forms.gle/2AFJMkKy9oBvGAC37 for online form or visit www.kbn.university to fill the online form latest by 10th Jan. 2025 by 6:00 pm. Only shortlisted candidates will be intimated on 13th Jan. 2025. The University reserves the right to alter the dates in case of any logistic issue.
Registrar

Scan for Application Form

KHAJA BANDANAWAZ UNIVERSITY
Admin Block, University Campus, Rauza-i Buzurg, KALABURAGI - 585104 KARNATAKA STATE.
www.kbn.university registrar@kbn.university

DCM DK Shivakumar on Saturday accused the Centre of not granting land to construct a memorial in honour of former PM Dr Manmohan Singh in New Delhi. After paying his last respects to Singh, Shivakumar said there is nothing wrong in AICC chief Mallikarjun Kharge's demand for a piece of land to build the memorial. The Centre should have considered it generously, he added

EGG THROW ROW

Let CBI probe all old cases against Munirathna, says DK Suresh

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

FORMER Bengaluru Rural MP **DK Suresh** here on Saturday said BJP should take the initiative to hand over all cases related to Rajarajeshwari Nagar MLA Munirathna to CBI. Even the POCSO case related to former CM BS Yediyurappa should be given to the CBI, he added.

He hit out at BJP state chief BY Vijayendra and MLC CT Ravi for visiting Munirathna. Digging into the MLA's past cases, he said, "Munirathna's chauffeur Raghu went missing and another boy from Mallatahalli, Ranjith, broke his arm and leg under suspicious circumstances."

Suresh said the media should expose Munirathna's past and how he used his brother Korangu, who was a rowdy-sheeter, to strike illegal deals. He said, "Let BJP leaders write a letter asking CBI to investigate these cases. Let this be included in the report given to the BJP high command. Munirathna's fake voter ID case too should be investigated by the CBI."

Despite Munirathna insulting women from Dalit and Vokkaliga communities, Ravi met him. "His audio of his indecent act has been proved to be true by FSL. The SIT has filed the chargesheet. Despite all this, Ravi went to his house," he added.

"One (Ravi) calls a woman a prostitute in the Council, and another (Munirathna) rapes women in the government-run temple of Vikasa Soudha when he was minister. BJP that talks about culture has accepted such people. Don't BJP leaders see that this sacred place was misused? Didn't a woman ask Vijayendra for his time to explain about Yediyurappa (caught in the POCSO case)? All these cases should be given to the CBI," he urged.

'Burnt hair has come back'

"The big doctor (Dr CN Manjunath), who examined Munirathna said his hair was burnt and he should get a CT scan. But yesterday evening, I saw another video in which Munirathna met CT Ravi, came out of his house and spoke to the media. In the video, Munirathna's burnt hair had come back. The media should test whether Munirathna has put a wig on his head or has real hair. Shouldn't we believe the big doctor who said that his hair was burnt," Suresh said.

Bidar contractor's suicide: FIR against ex-corporator, 5 others

Police take action against accused only after intense protests by BJP workers

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Kalaburagi

THE personnel of Station Bazar police station in Kalaburagi city on Saturday registered an FIR against six persons, including Congress leader and former corporator Raju Kapanoor — who is said to be a follower of Kalaburagi district in-charge minister Priyank Kharge, on the basis of a complaint filed by Kalaburagi city unit BJP president Chandrakant Patil that he (Patil) and three others are facing death threats by Kapanoor and five others, who were named in the complaint.

The police registered the FIR following high drama, protests by BJP workers and alleged refusal by the police inspector to register the FIR. BJP activists, including Patil, Kalaburagi Rural MLA Basavaraj Mattimudu, BJP district spokesman Rajkumar Patil Telkur, former MLC Amaranth Patil and party district president (Rural) Shivaraj Patil Raddewadagi, put pressure on the police to register the FIR. They went to the police station around 6.30 pm and filed the complaint against Kapanoor, his associates Nandkumar Nagabhujange, Gorakhanath Sajjan Chinchansoor, Pratapdheer Patil (Pappu Patil), Manoj Shejwal and Ramanagowda Patil.

Their complaint states that a contractor from Bidar, Sachin Panchal, who committed suicide on Thursday, had stated in his death note that he was facing pressure from Kapanoor and his followers to pay Rs 1 crore. Panchal had also mentioned that Patil, Mattimudu, BJP leader Manikanth Rathod and pontiff of Karuneshwara Mutt of Andola Siddalinga Swamiji were facing death threats from the accused.

BJP workers burn tyres in protest against alleged police inaction in the contractor's suicide case, near Jagat Circle in Kalaburagi on Saturday | EXPRESS

The BJP leaders alleged that the Station Bazar police station inspector made them wait for three hours, behaved rudely with them and refused to register the complaint. When the BJP leaders put pressure on him, the inspector gave an endorsement on the acknowledgement copy of the complaint stating that he would register the FIR after getting consent from the court.

The activists, who were angry with the inspector's behaviour, gathered in large numbers at Jagat Circle in the heart of Kalaburagi city and protested by burning tyres and blocking traffic. Shivaraj Patil Raddewadagi, Basavaraj Mattimudu, Rajkumar Patil Telkur, Chandrakant Patil and others led the protest.

They submitted a memorandum to the Kalaburagi deputy commissioner, urging him to direct the police to register the FIR. They demanded that the police inspector be suspended for his behaviour against the BJP MLA. They also sought the resignation of Priyank Kharge, arguing that his followers would not have resorted to threats without his blessings.

Later, even as the activists were protesting, DCP Kanika Sakriwal arrived at the spot and handed over a copy of the FIR registered against the six persons. It is said that the FIR was registered after the police took permission from the court.

Let there be probe, no way involved in contractor's suicide, says Priyank

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

KARNATAKA RDPR and IT-BT Minister **Priyank Kharge** here on Saturday said he is no way responsible for Bidar contractor Sachin Panchala's suicide and requested Home Minister Dr G Parameshwara to initiate a probe into the case for the truth to come out.

"I had a word with the home minister over the phone since he was not in Bengaluru. Once he is back, I will discuss it and request him to conduct a probe by an independent agency within the home department," he stated.

He held an emergency press conference as BJP is demanding his resignation and arrest, alleging that his supporter Raju Kapanoor had harassed Panchal, driving him to to suicide.

"For over a year, BJP has been trying to get me to resign on one issue or another. It has become a routine for them. Me, my department or the government are not involved in the contractor's suicide. BJP doesn't understand law. Am I an accused or has my name figured as an abettor? On what grounds they are demanding my arrest," he thundered.

He alleged that BJP is politicising the issue to save its own skin as former CM BS Yediyurappa is accused in a POCSO case, Rajarajeshwari Nagar MLA Munirathna is caught in a rape case, MLC CT Ravi is accused of making derogatory remarks against minister Laxmi Hebbalkar and party is being roiled by internal bickering due to factionalism. He charged that the opposition party is targeting him as he has strong ideological inclinations against its masters.

"Eight persons are accused in the case and one of them (Raju Kapanoor) is our Congress corporator's brother which I cannot deny. Does that mean I was involved in their business transactions which were also legal transactions and there was no ambiguity? If there is anything amiss, the investigation will establish it. But how does that make me liable? Not alone in Kalaburagi, let BJP protest against me across Karnataka," he said.

He said former RDPR minister KS Eshwarappa's case during the previous BJP government, where contractor Santhosh Patil committed suicide, is entirely different as the contractor had blamed the then minister. Later, BJP denied him the ticket in the Assembly elections.

BJP wants Priyank sacked, arrested: BJP

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

LEADER of Opposition in the Legislative Council **Chalavadi Narayanaswamy** and MLC N Ravi Kumar on Saturday called for the removal of RDPR Minister Priyank Kharge from the cabinet, and his arrest, in connection with the suicide of contractor Sachin Panchal in Bidar.

Narayanaswamy came down heavily on the minister, alleging that the administration in Kalaburagi has completely collapsed. "The minister has got his cronies involved in all kinds of scams by getting whoever he wants as partners in everything. There are scams of sand, tiles, and cement factories; he has been involved in all of them. For the contracts also, his people have been favoured, which was why Sachin committed suicide. A high-level probe should be conducted into all this," Narayanaswamy urged.

Priyank should be removed from his ministerial post and arrested immediately. He demanded that the government should get him to fully cooperate with the investigation. "Otherwise, our party leaders and workers will fight for it fiercely," he warned.

"The deceased Sachin has written a 7-page death note and posted it on social media. There was a mention of the idea of 'killing Andola Swamiji, Chandu Patil, Basavaraj Mattimud through supari'," he alleged.

He further stated that "Priyank had converted Kalaburagi as his own republic, with the administration, including the police, working at his behest to harass his political opponents".

Meanwhile, Ravi Kumar mentioned, "Priyank held a press conference to save his skin. Former RDPR minister Eshwarappa resigned, in the wake of Belagavi contractor Santhosh Patil's suicide, despite the court saying he had no role in it. Priyank should also resign as his name was mentioned by Sachin, as the former had called him. If he comes out clean in the probe, let him become the CM."

Koppal greens oppose N-plant near bear sanctuary, monolithic site

RAGHOTTAM KOPPAR @ Koppal

KOPPAL farmers, social activists, ecologists and history lovers have opposed a survey to set up a nuclear power plant near Arasinakeri Bear Sanctuary and Hirebenkala Megalithic sites.

The central government has planned a nuclear power plant in Koppal district, but environmentalists and farmers have raised concerns over its impact on wildlife, human settlements and Tungabhadra reservoir. The Gangavati taluk administration recently conducted the survey

AI-GENERATED IMAGE

near Chikka Benakal and identified 1,200 acres for the power plant and submitted a report to the district administration.

Hirebenkal is one of largest megalithic sites in Karnataka. Protected by the Archaeological Survey of India, it has approximately 400 megalithic structures built about 2,800 years ago. History lovers say it has been proposed to be included in the UNESCO World Heritage site list. If the nuclear power plant is set up here, it may harm the site. Villagers around Hirebenkal said they will face health issues if the power plant is set up in the vicinity.

The Arasinakeri forest along with Methgal and nearby agricultural lands falls under the Bear Sanctuary's jurisdiction. The region is known for its rich wildlife, including bears, leopards, wolves and rabbits. Recent road accidents, human encroachments and deforestation have already harmed the bear population. If a nuclear power plant is set up, it will definitely impact wildlife, environmentalists argue.

Arasinkeri villagers said the district administration can identify other land which is safer. If the administration goes ahead with its plan, the villagers threatened to protest in front of the deputy commissioner's office. Former MLC HR Srinath of Koppal told the media that the proposal should be cancelled or they will stage an intense protest.

Lingaraj Hosamani, a farmer, said, "The district administration is silently conducting surveys. But DC Nalin Atul very well knows that the Bear Sanctuary and Monolithic sites are like cynosures of our district. We have to save them. If a nuclear power plant comes up here, we all know the effects. We are already suffering from thick, black smoke from industries."

POLITICS

A YEAR OF POLITICAL UPHEAVALS

RAMU PATIL

IT was a politically charged year marked by scams and scandals allegedly involving politicians, and elections that saw oscillating fortunes for parties and their top leaders. The Congress government and its top leaders, including Chief Minister Siddaramaiah were mired in controversies and facing serious charges. The CM and his family members are being investigated by the Lokayukta police in the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) sites allotment case. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) is also investigating the case.

The MUDA had allotted 14 residential sites in an upmarket locality in Mysuru to the CM's wife. The sites were returned after the governor sanctioned prosecuting the CM, and the High Court made scathing observations. The MUDA developments caused major embarrassment to the CM and the government. For Siddaramaiah, a lot depends on the outcome of the ongoing probe in the case.

The government was also embroiled in a multi-crore scam in the Karnataka Maharshi Valmiki Scheduled Tribes Development Corporation. Funds from the corporation's bank accounts were illegally transferred to private accounts. Funds meant for the welfare of people from scheduled castes were allegedly used in the Lok Sabha polls. The scam was exposed after a corporation official died by suicide, leaving behind a death note. Scheduled Tribes Welfare Minister B Nagendra resigned and was arrested by the ED. The role of the Finance Department officials is also said to be under the scanner of the central agency.

The Siddaramaiah government faced a major backlash over handling the Waqf land issue, while alleged corruption in the Excise department embarrassed the party, as the BJP took it up in the Maharashtra polls. Perhaps for the first time, pro-Pakistan slogans were raised in the corridors of the Vidhana Soudha, when Congress won the Rajya Sabha polls. The government was accused of going soft on the accused.

The government was also accused of not providing adequate funds to MLAs to take up development works in their constituencies. Some of them even called for a relook at the five guarantee schemes with a budget allocation of Rs 56,000 crore. However, the government ruled out any compromise on its flagship schemes.

Leadership issues and an agreement purportedly worked out by the Congress high command to share power between Siddaramaiah and DK Shivakumar also often come for discussions in political circles. There is no clarity on it. The CM's remark dismissing any such agreement has also not fully cleared the air.

For now, the Congress appears to be going strong in Karnataka under Siddaramaiah-Shivakumar's leadership. It was reaffirmed by the party's 3:0 emphatic win in the Assembly bypolls. However, the Congress fell short of its expectations in the Lok Sabha polls. It won just nine out of 28 seats.

On their part, after facing a humiliating defeat in the Assembly polls last year, BJP-JDS made a comeback of sorts in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls after forging a pre-poll alliance. Former chief minister HD Kumaraswamy's elevation as the Union minister helped the regional party stave off an existential crisis.

His son Nikhil's defeat in the

Assembly bypolls was a setback for the party's first family and its efforts to launch him into electoral politics. But, it is not something that will have significant consequences for the regional party.

The JDS faced a major crisis during the Lok Sabha polls over a sex scandal allegedly involving then MP and JDS-BJP candidate Prajwal Revanna. Prajwal was accused of allegedly sexually assaulting several women and videos went viral towards the end of the first phase of the LS polls, when campaigning for the second phase was at its peak. Former prime minister HD Deve Gowda's grandson, Prajwal lost the election in the party's bastion, Hassan. He was arrested and sent to jail.

Prajwal's father HD Revanna, MLA and former minister, was also arrested in the case. Shockingly, Prajwal's brother and JDS MLC Suraj Revanna was arrested for allegedly sexually abusing a man. It was a time of serious crisis for the Gowda family and the JDS. To some extent, Kumaraswamy salvaged the situation.

It was a challenging year for the BJP as well. Though it managed to keep up pressure on the Siddaramaiah government over several issues, internal crisis dogged the party. Several senior leaders openly rebelled against state president BY Vijayendra's leadership. Internal crisis spilled over to the streets and discipline went for a toss.

While the government launched a probe into alleged irregularities in the Covid-19 pandemic management during the BJP rule, a BJP MLA and former minister Munirathna Naidu was arrested in a rape case. At the fag end of the year, Congress and BJP indulged in an acrimonious fight over BJP MLC CT Ravi's alleged derogatory remarks against Women and Child Welfare Minister Laxmi Hebbalkar, and the police allegedly harassing the BJP lawmaker. There was never a dull moment in state politics in the year that is coming to an end.

2024: A TROUBLED YEAR IN PARADISE FOR KARNATAKA

KARNATAKA is a mini India. Historically, its culture and heritage, both socially and politically, have always been vantage points. Its development is unparalleled since re-organisation, with 7.2% growth in GDP year-on-year and 16% increase in receipts with a fiscal deficit under 2.7%. Its pivotal position is due largely to its climate, work culture, and conducive and inclusive political ambiance. Bengaluru, its crown jewel, thrived at the cost of an imbalance disfavouring Kittur and Kalyana Karnataka regions.

However, ruling parties seem to be realising that this imbalance may affect Karnataka negatively. The people continue to take the government policy of five guarantees with a pinch of salt. Since its formation, the Congress government has suffered from issues in leadership, discussions about a failing economy, increasing prices, increased taxation, corruption, and crime. The Opposition on the other hand has responded ineffectively, realising neither its role nor responsibility.

Natural disasters and departmental scams have weakened the moral position of the state leadership, with the largest contributor being unresolved issues within MUDA, denting the leadership of two-time Chief Minister Siddaramaiah. Many utsavas – like Siddaramotsava – have only made Congress appear sillier, seen as vain defences by a party cleaning up its image. Sex scandals from a known political family, political links to honey traps, couch stories in Sandalwood, rapes, murders, and other crimes, and communal- and caste-based clashes have all undeniably hurt the gentle image of Karnataka.

HARISH RAMASWAMY
Political Analyst

A distasteful fallout between the constitutional head and the democratic head of the state has reignited age-old strains with the Centre, putting before intellectuals the need to re-examine the workings of Indian federalism and its cooperative nature, and calling for a reinterpretation of the provisions of the Constitution in light of consequent Supreme Court judgments.

In education – be it NEP or the establishment of new universities – the state has failed to demonstrate maturity or understanding of Higher Education and failed to separate education from politics. This has dragged Karnataka ten steps backwards, compared to its progressive policies from the periods of S Nijalingappa and Ramakrishna Hegde. The callousness with which education is treated is symbolic of the retrograde thinking of the Congress leadership today. The state failed to prioritise expenditure for education and the revised NEP is another mirage of an ideologues' paradise.

From engineering to medicine to universities in general, Karnataka – once known for its quality education – is now a desert. Politically, public discourses among the leadership of the three major parties has continuously downgraded the image of the state. An assortment of scams; embittered personal rivalries; casual flouting of law and order; unnecessary communal flare-ups; issues of Waqf; divisions within the Opposition; and rampant polarisation, cheapish public discourses – leaders in all these parties have been painted as nitwits by visual media. The 24X7 media is awestruck with politics and chintzy news, losing its intellectual and watchdog obligation unfortunately. It's time they act dependable.

It is unfortunate, on the other hand, that too much media is eroding the image of good leaders vying for visibility. Paradise is troubled. Karnataka's only hope is that 2025 will arrest this decline and boost the standards of politics and social ethos for which the state was once known.

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Department of Information and Public Relations, Punjab

ಕಾವೇರಿ ನೀರಾವರಿ ನಿಗಮ ನಿಯಮಿತ
(ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರದ ಒಂದು ಉದ್ಯಮ)
ಕಾರ್ಯಪಾಲಕ ಇಂಜಿನಿಯರ್ ರವರ ಕಛೇರಿ, ಕಬಿನಿ ನಾಲೆಗಳ ವಿಭಾಗ,
ನಂಜನಗೂಡು, ಮೈಸೂರು ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ.
ದೂರವಾಣಿ/ಫ್ಯಾಕ್ಸ್: 08221-226261, email: kcdngd@gmail.com

ಸಂಕ್ಷಿಪ್ತ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ.
(ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಪಬ್ಲಿಕ್ ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಇ-ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿ ಮುಖಾಂತರ)

ಈ ಕಛೇರಿ ಅಲ್ಪಾವಧಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: 12/2024-25 ದಿ.23.12.2024

ರೂ. **17.00** ರಿಂದ **26.00** ಲಕ್ಷದ ವರೆಗಿನ ಮೊತ್ತದ ಏತ ಯೋಜನೆಗೆ ಸಂಬಂಧಿಸಿದ ವಾರ್ಷಿಕ ನಿರ್ವಹಣೆ & ಪೋಷಣೆ ಹಾಗು ನೀರುಗಂಟಿಗಳನ್ನು ಒದಗಿಸುವ ಒಟ್ಟು 3 ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗಳಿಗೆ ಕೆ.ಡಬ್ಲ್ಯು-1 & 2 ಅನುಸಾರ ಐಟಂವಾರು ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ಗಳನ್ನು ಕೆ.ಪಿ.ಪಿ-ಇ-ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ಮುಖೇನ ಅರ್ಹ ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆದಾರರಿಂದ ಅರ್ಜಿ ಆಹ್ವಾನಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ.

ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರೊಸೆಸಿಂಗ್ ಶುಲ್ಕ, ಇ.ಎಂ.ಡಿ. ಮೊತ್ತ ಹಾಗೂ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸುವ ಕೊನೆಯ ದಿನಾಂಕ ಮತ್ತು ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಅನ್ನು ತೆರೆಯುವ ದಿನಾಂಕ ಹಾಗೂ ಇತರೆ ವಿವರಗಳನ್ನು ಅಂತರ್ಜಾಲದ ಮೂಲಕ ವೆಬ್‌ಸೈಟ್ ವಿಳಾಸ: https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in ರಲ್ಲಿ ಪಡೆಯಬಹುದು.

ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ವಿವರಗಳನ್ನು ಸದರಿ ಕಛೇರಿಯಿಂದ ಪಡೆಯಬಹುದಾಗಿದೆ.

ಸಹಿ/- ಕಾರ್ಯಪಾಲಕ ಇಂಜಿನಿಯರ್, ಕಬಿನಿ ನಾಲೆಗಳ ವಿಭಾಗ, ನಂಜನಗೂಡು

MAHATRANSCO

INVITATION FOR BID (IFB)
(LOCAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING)

SRM e-Tender No. T-2491/MSETCL/CO/Projects/Pre-Tender (RFx No. 6000001291)

MSETCL invites offers by SRM e-tendering in TWO bid system (Techno-Commercial Bid and Price Bid) from the eligible registered bidders for the following work as detailed below.

"Establishment of 132/33 kV Barashiv substation Dist. Hingoli along with associated line under Ch. Sambhajinagar Zone, on turnkey basis."

Interested bidders may obtain further information available on the website. **https://srmetender.mahatransco.in**

The date of downloading of Bid documents available on the website is from 19.12.2024.

Sd/-
Chief Engineer (Projects), MSETCL.

MAHATRANSCO

INVITATION FOR BID (IFB)
(LOCAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING)

SRM e-Tender No. T-2490/MSETCL/CO/Projects/Pre-Tender (RFx No. 6000001290)

MSETCL invites offers by SRM e-tendering in TWO bid system (Techno-Commercial Bid and Price Bid) from the eligible registered bidders for the following work as detailed below.

"Establishment of 220/132 kV Bhaler (Nandurbar) Substation along with associated EHV Tr. Lines under Nashik zone, on turnkey basis."

Interested bidders may obtain further information available on the website. **https://srmetender.mahatransco.in**

The date of downloading of Bid documents available on the website is from 19.12.2024.

Sd/-
Chief Engineer (Projects), MSETCL.

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PUBLIC NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY APPENDIX IV-A (See proviso to Rule 8(6)

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) and 9(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to Borrower(s)/Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable properties mortgaged/charged to IDBI Bank Limited (Secured Creditor), the constructive/Physical Possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of IDBI Bank Limited (Secured Creditor), will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is on 15th January 2025 for recovery of amount due to IDBI Bank Limited (Secured Creditor) for the below mentioned Borrower(s)/Guarantor(s)/Mortgagors.

Date and Time of Auction: 15th January 2025 from 10:00 AM to 1.00 PM

Last date of online submission of Bid: 14th January 2025 before 02:00 PM. EMD Payment to be made into IDBI A/c No: 114034915010026; IFSC CODE: IBKL0001140 with relevant Bid Documents to reach us on or before : **14th January 2025** before **02:00 PM** to IDBI Bank Limited, Retail Recovery, 3rd Floor, No.58, IDBI House, Mission Road, Bengaluru-560027.

Minimum Bid increment: Rs.10,000/- (Rupees Ten Thousand Only).

(1) Name & Address of the Borrower: Mrs. Savitha B M # 803, 8TH Floor, A- Block, Vaishnavi Nakshatra Apts, Tumkur Road Yeshwanthapur, Bangalore-560022.

Demand Notice: 27-06-2019 **Possession Notice: 22-11-2019**

Outstanding Amount: Rs.1,18,49,522/- (Rupees One Crore Eighteen Lakh Forty Nine Thousand Five Hundred and Twenty Two Only) as on 10.10.2023 together with further interest and charges thereon with effect from 10-10-2023. (less further payments , if any).

Property details: SCHEDULE I PROPERTY : All that piece and parcel of Property Old Survey No.16/1 and now Re-Survey No. 16/3, situated at Vijinapura Village, Krishnarajapuram Hobli, Bangalore East Taluk, Bangalore converted from agricultural to non- agricultural residential use, vide the order dated 14/09/2010, passed by the Special Deputy Commissioner, Bangalore District in Official Memorandum bearing No.ALN(E)SR(KH)66/2010-11 situated at Old Survey No.16/1 and now Re-Survey No.16/3, situated at Vijinapura Village, Krishnarajapuram Hobli, Bangalore East Taluk, Bangalore measuring 2 Acres including 1 Gunta Kharab of Land bounded on the : East by : Land Bearing Sy No.18, West by :Banaswadi Village Boundry & Road, North by : Remaining portion of the same Survey, South by : Land bearing Sy.No. 15. **SCHEDULE II PROPERTY:** Part of the schedule I property agreed to be sold to the Second Part 507 sft undivided right, title and interest in IMMOVABLE PROPERTY mentioned in Schedule I above. **SCHEDULE III PROPERTY:** Apartment bearing Flat No.A-310, A Block, 3rd Floor, of 1690 Sft Super Built-up area, containing 3BHK, together with one covered car parking space, along with proportionate share in common areas such as Passages, Lobbies, Staircase, contained in the Multi storied building to be constructed on the SCHEDULE I Property known as "ADITI ELOQUENT".

Reserve Price: Rs.85,09,000/- **EMD: Rs.8,50,900/-**

(2) Name & Address of the Borrower; Mr. Yesu Raja and Mrs. Usha V No.297/13B, 1st Floor, New No.2, 9th Cross, Anthony Swamy Layout, Lingarajapuram, Bangalore - 560084

Demand Notice: 16.03.2023 **Possession Notice: 20.05.2024**

Loan Outstanding Amount: Rs.44,74,924.00 (Rupees Forty Four Lakhs Seventy Four Thousand Nine Hundred Twenty Four Only) as on 09/03/2023 together with further interest and charges thereon with effect from 10-03-2023. (less further payments , if any).

Property details: Schedule 'A' Property : All that piece and parcel of the immovable vacant property bearing Site No.42 Kallubalu Gram Panchayath Katha No.480, formed out of Sy No. 97/2, 107, 108/1, 108/2 converted for Non-agricultural Residential purposes vide OM bearing No.ALN/(AJ)SR/73/05-06 dated 09.08.2006, layout plan was approved by the BMRDA Anekal Planning Authority vide No.BMRDA/ APA/LAO/44/2006-07 dated 02.01.2008 in the layout known as CLASSIC CHAMPAKADHAMA situated at Harappanahalli Village, Jigani Hobli, Anekal Taluk hereinafter called the Schedule Property East to West 24 meters and North to South (33+29.8)/2 meters Total measuring 744.96 Sq. meters and bounded as follow: East by : Site No.43;West by : Site No.4;North by Road; South by;Sy Private Property

Schedule 'B' Property : undivided share right 433.645 Sq feet of, title and interest in the land comprised in the Schedule 'A' property.

Schedule 'C' Property : All the piece and parcel of the Flat bearing No.GF-003 in ground Floor "CLASSIC CHAMPAKADHAMA", with SBA of 1313 Sq feet AND 433.645 (UDS) Sq feet, undivided share from built in Schedule A property, consisting 2 BHK house with attached bathroom, toilet, with vitrified tiles flooring Modular Kitchen, wardrobes, power backup and including basement one car parking and bounded: East by Open Space; West by Ground Floor Flat No.GF 002; North by Open Space; South by Ground Floor Flat No.GF 004

Reserve Price: Rs.62,51,000/- **EMD: Rs.6,25,100/-**

(3) Name & Address of the Borrower: Ms.Veena Lakshmi & Mr.Parasuraman C S Ms. Veena Lakshmi Parasuraman, D/o.Mr.Parasuraman C, Residing at No.38, Kagal nagar Road, No.2,Jamshedpur, Sonari East, Singhbhum, Jarkhand-831011 ,M-09234505530

Demand Notice: 13-09-2023 **Possession Notice: 21-05-2024**

Outstanding Amount: Rs. 61,51,229.00/- (Sixty One Lakh Fifty One Thousand Two Hundred Twenty Nine Rupees only) towards the outstanding dues in respect of the Loans as on 09-08-2023, together with further interest and charges thereon

Property details: SCHEDULE OF THE PROPERTY: All that piece and parcel of property residentially converted land measuring 2 Acres 8 Guntas in Sy.No;108/3 (previously portion of Sy.No:108/2, Kachanayakanahalli Village, Jigani Hobli, Anekal Taluk, Bangalore District), bearing RDPR No:150200103200820885, property No:522/108/3, situated at Kachanayakanahalli Village, Hennagara Village Panchayath, Anekal Block, Bangalore District (land converted for non-agricultural residential purposes vide Official Memorandum dated 11-11-1992 vide No:B/DIS/ALN/SR(A)/ 103/1988-89, issued by Special Deputy Commissioner, Bangalore District, Bangalore) and bounded on the : East By : Land in Sy.No:108/2: West By: Road, carved out of kharab land; North By : Road, carved out of kharab land; South By Tank Bed

SCHEDULE 'B' PROPERTY: (Undivided share, right, title and interest of land to be conveyed under this Sale Deed) 400 Sq.Ft of undivided share, right, title and interest of land in the "A" Schedule Property;

SCHEDULE 'C PROPERTY: (Apartment conveyed under this Sale Deed) All that piece and parcel of property bearing Flat No. E-401 totally measuring a super built-up area of 1089 Sq.ft in the Third Floor in "E" Block along with covered Car Parking space in the Basement/Surface/Stilt Floor numbered as E-401 along with 400 Sq.ft of undivided interest in land comprising Schedule 'A' Property is one of such apartment units/flats in the said Apartment Building "GARDEN RESIDENCY", situated at Kachanayakanahalli Village, JIgani Hobli, Anekal Taluk, Bengaluru District, Bengaluru and bounded on: East by: Residential Apartment Privately numbered as E-402 in Third Floor of "E" Block West by: Common stair case North by: Area open to sky of the apartment building South by: Common Corridor Together with fixtures and fittings attached to the above mentioned property

Reserve Price: Rs. 41,45,400/- **EMD: Rs. 4,14,540/-**

(4) Name & Address of the Borrower: Mrs. Shruthi Ponanna Areyada No.80 `PRARTHANA`,60 Feet Road, NGEF Layout, Sanjay Nagar,Near Karnataka Bank, Bangalore- 560094

Demand Notice: 27-06-2019 **Possession Notice: 22-11-2019**

Outstanding Amount: Rs. 93,06,247/- (Rupees Ninety Three Lakh Six Thousand Two Hundred and Forty Seven Only) as on 02-08-2023 together with further interest and charges thereon with effect from 02-08-2023 (less further payments , if any).

Property details: SCHEDULE I PROPERTY: All that piece and parcel of Property Old Survey No. 16/1 and now Re-Survey No. 16/3, situated at Vijinapura Village, Krishnarajapuram Hobli, Bangalore East Taluk, Bangalore converted from agricultural to non- agricultural residential use, vide the order dated 14/09/2010, passed by the Special Deputy Commissioner, Bangalore District in Official Memorandum bearing No.ALN(E)SR(KH)66/2010-11 situated at Old Survey No.16/1 and now Re-Survey No.16/3, situated at Vijinapura Village, Krishnarajapuram Hobli, Bangalore East Taluk, Bangalore measuring 2 Acres including 1 Gunta Kharab of Land bounded on the : East by : Land Bearing Sy No.18 West by : Banaswadi Village Boundry & Road, North by : Remaining portion of the same Survey South by : Land bearing Sy.No. 15.

SCHEDULE II PROPERTY: Part of the schedule I property agreed to be sold to the Second Part 384 sft undivided right, title and interest in IMMOVABLE PROPERTY mentioned in Schedule I above.

SCHEDULE III PROPERTY: Apartment bearing Flat No.308, A Block, 3rd Floor, of 1280 Sft Super Built-up area, containing, 2BHK, together with one covered car parking space, along with proportionate share in common areas such as Passages, Lobbies, Staircase, contained in the Multi storied building to be constructed on the SCHEDULE I Property known as "ADITI ELOQUENT"

Reserve Price: Rs.62,00,000/- **EMD: Rs.6,20,000/-**

(5) Name & Address of the Borrower: Mrs. Shruthi Ponanna Areyada No.80 `PRARTHANA`,60 Feet Road, NGEF Layout, Sanjay Nagar,Near Karnataka Bank, Bangalore- 560094

Demand Notice: 27-06-2019 **Possession Notice: 22-11-2019**

Outstanding Amount: Rs. 89,07,683/- (Rupees Eighty Nine Lakhs Seven Thousand Six Hundred Eighty Three Only) as on 02-08-2023 together with further interest and charges thereon with effect from 02-08-2023. (less further payments , if any).

Property details: SCHEDULE I PROPERTY : All that piece and parcel of Property Old Survey No.16/1 and now Re-Survey No. 16/3, situated at Vijinapura Village, Krishnarajapuram Hobli, Bangalore East Taluk, Bangalore converted from agricultural to non- agricultural residential use, vide the order dated 14/09/2010, passed by the Special Deputy Commissioner, Bangalore District in Official Memorandum bearing No.ALN(E)SR(KH)66/2010-11 situated at Old Survey No.16/1 and now Re-Survey No.16/3, situated at Vijinapura Village, Krishnarajapuram Hobli, Bangalore East Taluk, Bangalore measuring 2 Acres including 1 Gunta Kharab of Land bounded on the : East by : Land Bearing Sy No.18, West by :Banaswadi Village Boundry & Road, North by : Remaining portion of the same Survey, South by : Land bearing Sy.No. 15.

SCHEDULE II PROPERTY: Part of the schedule I property agreed to be sold to the Second Part 384 sft undivided right, title and interest in IMMOVABLE PROPERTY mentioned in Schedule I above.

SCHEDULE III PROPERTY: Apartment bearing Flat No.408, B-Block FOURTH Floor, measuring 1280 Sft super built up area, containing 2 bedrooms, together with one covered car parking space, along with proportionate share in common areas such as Passages, Lobbies, Staircase, contained in the Multi storied building to be constructed on the SCHEDULE I Property known as "ADITI ELOQUENT"

Reserve Price: Rs.62,00,000/- **EMD: Rs.6,20,000/-**

(6) Name & Address of the Borrower: Mr. Siddappa & Mrs. Sujathaa No. 108, BEL Colony, Behind Ganesh Temple, Jalahalli, Bengaluru-560013.

Demand Notice: 12-06-2023 **Possession Notice: 07-09-2023**

Outstanding Amount: Rs.25,65,857/- (Rupees Twenty Five Lakh Sixty Five Thousand Eight Hundred and Fifty Seven Only) as on 10-05-2023 together with further interest and charges thereon with effect from 10-05-2023. (less further payments , if any).

Property details: All that piece and parcel of the immovable property bearing Site No. 14, known as Nanjundeshwara Nagara C Block, formed in Sy No. 53, Khata No. 463(old), 463/14(New) and vajarahalli village, Panchayat Khata No ID: 150300701900802452 situated at Mallapura Village, Kasaba Hobli, Nelamangala Taluk, Bangalore Urban District, measuring East to West: 40-0 feet and North to South: 30-0 feet and bounded as follows. East by: Road, West by: Site No. 12, North by: Road, South by: Site No. 13.

Reserve Price: Rs.26,77,000/- **EMD: Rs.2,67,700/-**

(7) Name & Address of the Borrower: Mr. Kunigal Govindasetty Swamy & Mrs. B N Leelavathi, S/o. Mr. Kunigal Sheshaiah Govindasetty, No.2440, Housing Board Colony, Kunigal , K.R.S. Agrahara, Tumkur Road, Kunigal- 572130.

Demand Notice: 02-11-2018 **Possession Notice: 13-06-2019**

Outstanding Amount: Rs.91,92,604/- (Rupees Ninety One Lakh Ninety Two Thousand Six Hundred and Four Only) as on 02-08-2023 together with further interest and charges thereon with effect from 02-08-2023. (less further payments , if any).

Property details: All that piece and parcel of Residential Converted Land Bearing Sy.No.73/5 measuring 1 Acre 17 Guntas and Residential Converted Land Bearing Sy.No.73/6 measuring 21 Guntas both the properties totally measuring 1 Acre 38 Guntas, (converted vide Official Memorandum dated 6/7/2013, bearing No.ALN(EVH)SR/443/2012-13, issued by Deputy Commissioner, Bangalore District Bangalore), Presently Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike Katha No.359/73/5/73/6/17, situated at Balagere Village, Varthur Hobli, Bangalore East Taluk. Bangalore and bounded as: East by: Remaining portion of Sy.No.73/5 and 73/6; West by: Remaining portion of Sy.No.73/5 and 73/6; North by: Land bearing Sy.No.73/4; South by : Road; **SCHEDULE 'B' PROPERTY**-314 Sq.feet, undivided share, right, title and interest in the Schedule-'A' Property (proportionate to the Schedule-C Property. **SCHEDULE 'C' PROPERTY**-Residential Apartment bearing No.412 in the Fourth Floor, Block-B, in Wing-C, admeasuring a super built area of 1172 Square Feet, consisting of 2 Bedrooms, in the Multistoried Residential Apartment Building Known as "SRI KRISHNA EXCEL STONE", constructed over the Schedule "A" Property Inclusive of proportionate share in the common area such as passage, lobbies, lift, staircase and other areas of common area, (including half portion in depth of the joints between the Ceiling of the Apartment and floors of the apartment above it, internal and external walls between such levels) and the building is of RCC roofing as per specification appended hereto with separate electricity, common water and sanitation, including all rights, title, interest, privileges, appurtenances, together with a covered car parking space slot to be earmarked.

Reserve Price: Rs.52,33,000/- **EMD: Rs.5,23,300/-**

(8) Name & Address of the Borrower: Mr. Kunigal Govindasetty Swamy & Mrs. B N Leelavathi, S/o. Mr. Kunigal Sheshaiah Govindasetty, No.2440, Housing Board Colony, Kunigal , K.R.S. Agrahara, Tumkur Road, Kunigal- 572130.

Demand Notice: 02-11-2018 **Possession Notice: 13-06-2019**

Outstanding Amount: Rs.91,92,604/- (Rupees Ninety One Lakh Ninety Two Thousand Six Hundred and Four Only) as on 02-08-2023 together with further interest and charges thereon with effect from 02-08-2023. (less further payments , if any).

Property details: All that piece and parcel of Residential Converted Land Bearing Sy.No.73/5 measuring 1 Acre 17 Guntas and Residential Converted Land Bearing Sy.No.73/6 measuring 21 Guntas both the properties totally measuring 1 Acre 38 Guntas, (converted vide Official Memorandum dated 6/7/2013, bearing No.ALN(EVH)SR/443/2012-13, issued by Deputy Commissioner, Bangalore District Bangalore), Presently Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike Katha No.359/73/5/73/6/17, situated at Balagere Village, Varthur Hobli, Bangalore East Taluk. Bangalore and bounded as: East by: Remaining portion of Sy.No.73/5 and 73/6; West by: Remaining portion of Sy.No.73/5 and 73/6; North by: Land bearing Sy.No.73/4; South by : Road; **SCHEDULE 'B' PROPERTY**-314 Sq.feet, undivided share, right, title and interest in the Schedule-'A' Property (proportionate to the Schedule-C Property. **SCHEDULE 'C' PROPERTY**- Residential Apartment bearing No.412 in the Fourth Floor, Block-B, in Wing-C, admeasuring a super built area of 1172 Square Feet, consisting of 2 Bedrooms, in the Multistoried Residential Apartment Building Known as "SRI KRISHNA EXCEL STONE", constructed over the Schedule "A" Property Inclusive of proportionate share in the common area such as passage, lobbies, lift, staircase and other areas of common area, (including half portion in depth of the joints between the Ceiling of the Apartment and floors of the apartment above it, internal and external walls between such levels) and the building is of RCC roofing as per specification appended hereto with separate electricity, common water and sanitation, including all rights, title, interest, privileges, appurtenances, together with a covered car parking space slot to be earmarked.

Reserve Price: Rs.51,70,000/- **EMD: Rs.5,17,000/-**

(9) Name & Address of the Borrower: Mr. Dilip Kumar Acharya & Mrs. Smitarani Satapathy #05/7, 2nd Main, 2nd Cross, Neat Sakshi Mansion, Gopal Reddy Layout, Dodda Banaswadi, Vaddara Palya, Bangalore-560043.

Demand Notice: 05-09-2022 **Possession Notice: 12-10-2023**

Outstanding Amount: Rs.95,99,384/- (Rupees Ninety Five Lakh Ninety Nine Thousand Three Hundred and Eighty Four Only) as on 10-10-2023 together with further interest and charges thereon with effect from 10-10-2023. (less further payments , if any).

Property details: Schedule 'A' Property: All that piece and parcel of the Residential Converted land bearing SY No 13/2A, measuring 02 Acres, [converted as per the Official Memorandum bearing No ALN (EKHW) SR: 64/2012-13 dated 15/09/2012 issued by the Special Deputy Commissioner, Bangalore District, Bangalore] BBMP Khatha No 1093/74 situated at Hagadur Village, Krishnarajpura Hobli, Bangalore East Taluk, and bounded on the: East by : Land bearing Sy No 14; West by: Road and Land in Sy No. 13/2A; North by: Land bearing Sy No. 13/2B; South by: Land bearing Sy No. 13/1; **Schedule 'B' Property:** 469 Square Feet, in an undivided state, in the land described in Schedule 'A'Property above, together with corresponding right, title, interest and ownership. **Schedule 'C' Property:** Residential Apartment bearing No. 342, having super built up area of 1480 Sq. ft in the Third Floor, inclusive of proportionate share of common areas of along with one car parking space in the Basement floor of the Apartment building known as "SOWPARNIKA SANVI PHASE-II" together with the right to use passages, lobbys, lifts, stair case and other areas of common use. All the floors and ceilings between apartments as also walls between adjoining apartments shall be owned jointly and equally by the adjoining apartment owners. The apartment constructed with RCC roofing, Vitrified Flooring, Main Door teak wood frame, other internal doors are flesh doors, aluminum windows.

Reserve Price: Rs.82,65,000/- **EMD: Rs.8,27,000/-**

(10) Mr.Jayaprathap Ramamurthy and Mrs.Hamsa N No.314, 2nd Main, 2nd C Cross, Near CMR college OBMR layout, Chikkabanasawadi, Bangalore North – 5600034.

Demand Notice: 06-02-2023 **Possession Notice: 07-12-2023**

Outstanding Amount: Rs.33,89,872.90 (Rupees Thirty Three Lakh Eighty Nine Thousand Eight Hundred Seventy Two and Paisa Ninety Only) as on 09.02.2024 together with further interest and charges thereon with effect from 10-02-2024. (less further payments , if any).

Details of Property Mortgaged: Schedule 'A' Property All that piece and parcel of the property bearing H.Gollahalli Gram Panchayath No.150200302600220038, (fanned in Sy.No.28/1) admeasuring 3 Acres and 8 Guntas out of 4 acres and 29 guntas, situated at Doddabele Village, Kengeri Hobli, Banga ore South Taluk, Bangalore District and bounded on the: East by Sy.No.28/2 belonging to the Vendor; Westby Remaining portion in Sy.No.28/1, Road adjacent to Sy.No.28/1 and Sri.Venkatapura Village Borde; North by Remaining Portion of the Property bearing Sy No.28/1 ; South by;Sy No.26

Schedule 'B' Property 660.64 Square Feet undivided right, title and interest in the Schedule 'A' Property excluding the land reserved for road admeasuring approximately 183.63 Square Mete

Schedule 'C' Property All that piece and parcel of the apartment bearing No: A2-312, 3rd Floor, Block 'A', building known as 'VBHC Palmhaven', having H.Gollahalli Gram Panchayat Property No :1502003026oono667, admeasuring 750 Square Feet of super built up area, with one covered car parking space and bounded as follows: East by Flat No.314; West by Flat No.310; North by Corridor/Fiat No.311; South by Park

Reserve Price: Rs.45,75,000/- **EMD: Rs.4,57,500/-**

(11) Name & Address of the Borrower: Mrs.Rashmi Puravankara & Mr Girish Puravanakara Row House No: 27, LGCL Bamboo Forest, Sy No: 138/1 &139, Rayasandra Village, Sarjapura Hobli, Anekal, Bengaluru-560099 also at Villa No: 62-C, LGCL ASHLAR 52 Choodasandra, Kasavanahalli Main Road, Electronic City Post, Bengaluru-560099

Demand Notice: 21-01-2023 **Possession Notice: 07-12-2023**

Outstanding Amount: Rs. 2,44,35,059/- (Rupees Two Crore Forty Four Lakh Thirty Five Thousand and Fifty Nine Only) as on 15-01-2024 together with further interest and charges thereon with effect from 15-01-2024. (less further payments , if any).

Property details: Schedule-A(Description of the entire property) All that piece and parcel of residentially converted lands bearing survey No. 138/1 (portion of old survey No.91), measuring 20 guntas and survey No.139 (old survey No.91), measuring 1 acre 20 guntas, now bearing Property No. 79/138/139 (as per Grama Panchayath Records), Property Unique No. 150200100500300085, issued by Shanthipura Grama Panchayath, Anekal Taluk, situated at Rayasandra Village, Sarjapura Hobli, Anekal Taluk, Bangalore District, measuring in total 2 acres converted for non-agricultural/industrial use, vide Official Memorandum dated 25-01-2010, in No.ALN(A)(S)SR:327/09-10, change of land use from industrial use to residential use vide Order dated 15-04-2010, in No.201/109-10/153/10-11, issued by the Commissioner, Bangalore Development Authority, vide No.NA.MA/Aa.SA/Aa.Aa.3/54/2010-11, dated 28-09-2010, with all rights, appurtenances whatsoever whether underneath or above the surface and bounded on the: East by: Government Road and remaining portion of Survey No.139. West by: Remaining portion of Survey No.138 belonging to Gowramma and Survey No.7 of Naganathapura Village belonging to Krishnareddy. North by: Gomal Lands and portion of survey No. 139. South by: Rayasandra Road Schedule -'B' (Description of the property hereby conveyed) Item No.1-All that piece and parcel of portion of the Schedule 'A' Property beneath the row house more fully mentioned and described in the Schedule 'C' here below and measuring in total 1208 square feet. Item No.2-All that piece and parcel of 3.06% undivided share, right, title and interest in the Schedule 'A' Property forming part of the club house, common area and facilities. Schedule -'C' (Description of the Row House being constructed on the Schedule 'B' Property) Row house bearing No.27 being constructed on the portion of the Schedule 'A' Property (demarked in the Annexed Plan) having a super built-up area of 2537 square feet, with marble flooring, including one half part between the external walls abutting the adjoining row houses and further a Terrace area of 442 square feet forming part of the project named as "LGCL Bamboo Forest", along with exclusive right to use and enjoy the open area in the front and rear of the row house measuring 57 square feet and 140 square feet respectively, along with one open car parking space and the row house bounded on the: East by: Road, West by: Row house No.23, North by: Row house No.26, South by: Row house No.28.

Reserve Price: Rs.2,11,00,000/- **EMD: Rs.21,10,000/-**

(12) Name & Address of the Borrowers: Mr. Ananda N, No. C-30505, C Block, The Commune 1 Apartment, Marasur, Chandapura, Anekal, Marasur, Bangalore-562107

Demand Notice: 15-03-2023 **Possession Notice: 03-06-2023**

Outstanding Amount: Rs.45,24,755/- (Rupees Forty Five Lakh Twenty Four Thousand Seven Hundred and Fifty Five Only) as on 10-10-2023 together with further interest and charges thereon with effect from 10-10-2023. (less further payments , if any).

Property details: All that piece and parcel of the sole and absolute owner is in possession and enjoyment of property bearing Site No. 30 in Golden Residency Layout out of Khata No.1014/1738, E-Khata No.150200101800403249, Property No.1739/30, formed in Residential Converted of Sy. Nos.49, 498 and 535 Converted for Non-Agriculture Residential purpose vide separate orders bearing Nos. ALN/SR/ [A]/10/2005-06 dated 13-04-2005 and No.ALN/SR/[A]11/2005-06 dated 13-04-2005 issued by Asst Commissioner, Bangalore and residential sites as per approved layout, Which duly approved by the BMRDA by its Letter BMRDA/LAO/40/2005-06 dated 21-05-2005 in measuring East to West: 40 feet and North to South: East Side 46.2 Feet & West Side: 52.1 Feet totally measuring 1980 Sq.Feet situated at Marasur Village, Kasaba Hobli, Anekal Taluk, Bangalore District and bounded on East by 30 feet road, West by Site No.26, North by Site No.29 and South by Private Property.

Reserve Price: Rs.42,25,000/- **EMD: Rs.4,22,500/-**

(13) Name & Address of the Borrower: SAMSON A S/o Aruldass & Mrs. Selvi, D/o Krishna, R/o No. 28, 11th Main road, 9thCross, Abbigere Main Road, Raghavendra Layout Kammagondanahalli, Bangalore. 560015

Demand Notice: 13.08.2021 **Possession Notice: 14.12.2021**

Outstanding Amount: Rs.56,75,277.00 (Rupees Fifty Six Lakh Seventy Five Thousand Two Hundred Seventy Seven Only) as on 09.09.2024 together with further interest and charges thereon with effect from 10-09-2024. (less further payments , if any).

Details of Property Mortgaged: SCHEDULE 'A' : PROPERTY All that piece and parcel of vacant site bearing Nos. 9 to 13 of khata No. 449/28/6, which measuring to an extent of 1 acre and 22 guntas, which is carved out of converted land property bearing Sy. No. 28/6, in vide: Conversion Order No. ALN.SR(N)338/2004-05, dated 07-05-2005, issued by Special Deputy Commissioner, Bangalore District, Bangalore, situated at Kereguddadahalli Village, Yeshwanthapura Hobli, Bangalore North Taluk, Bangalore, and bounded on: East by : Road; West by : Private Property; North by : Road; South by : Private Property **SCHEDULE 'B'PROPERTY:** 296 Sq. Ft of undivided share, rights, title and interest in the total land of Schedule " A" property referred to above. **SCHEDULE 'C'PROPERTY:** Flat bearing No. 104, in the First Floor, constructed over the Schedule "A" property contains 3 bed rooms, kitchen, Dinning, Toilets, Living Room with one Car Parking bearing no. 104 and the super built area measuring 1404 sq. ft of the Apartment known as " DS-MAX Splendor Nest" together with an undivided share, right, title and interest of land as specified in Schedule " B" property referred to above, along with water & electricity together with common areas such as passages, lobbies, lifts, staircase and other areas for common use.

Reserve Price: Rs. 52,95,780/- **EMD: Rs. 5,29,578.00/-**

(14) Name & Address of the Borrower: Manjunath R & Smt Honamma, S/o Pamakrishnappa ,No-95/1,Hulthar Hosadoddi, Bidadi,Ramnagar (T),Ramnagar (D) Pin-562109

Demand Notice: 30-01-2023 **Possession Notice: 24-05-2023**

Outstanding Amount: Rs.10,04,695/- (Ten Lakh Four Thousand Six Hundred and ninety Five only) due as on 30-11-2022 together with further interest and charges thereon with effect from 01-12-2022. (less further payments , if any).

Property details: All that piece and parcels of the Plot No.118,Kaneshumari No.168/118,Syno.189,190,191 E, Khata No .152900400300401920, Bannikupe Village, Bidadi, Bannikupe road, Bidadi Hobli, Ramanagara Taluk in the state of Karnataka and is bounded by : North by: Site No.115, South by: Road, East by: Site No.119, West by : Site No.117.

Reserve Price: Rs.16,80,000/- **EMD: Rs.1,68,000/-**

(15) Name & Address of the Borrowers: Ms. Jecyntha and Mr. Nirmalin Vasanth G No 23, Flat no:301,2nd Floor, Vensa Lake View Apt,Ward No.06, Dasarahalli Village, Yelahanka,Bangalore-560024.

Demand Notice: 16-07-2021 **Possession Notice: 06-01-2022**

Outstanding Amount: Rs.71,46,086/- (Rupees Seventy one Lakh Forty six thousand and Eighty Six Only) as on 02-01-2023 + Applicable interest and thereon w.e.f.02-01-2023 plus Incidental Expenses, Charges and costs (less further Payments, if any).

Property details: SCHEDULE 'A'PROPERTY [Entire Property] All that piece and parcel of the property bearing Corporation No.23/58/1, 58/7, 58/8 and 58/9, situated at Dasarahalli, Bangalore, Ward No.6, comprised in the composite converted Sy. Nos.58/1, 58/7, 58/8 and 58/9 of Dasarahalli Village, K.R.Puram Hobli, Bangalore East Taluk, totally measuring 17,152 Sq.Ft. and bounded on as follows: East by : Land bearing Sy.No.59 & 61; West by : Road and thereafter remaining portion of the land in Sy.No.58/1,7,8 and 9; North by: Remaining portion of Sy. No.60; South by : Road and thereafter remaining portion of Sy.No.58/1. **SCHEDULE 'B' PROPERTY** (Undivided right in the land in Schedule A Property which is the subject matter of this Agreement of Sale) All that piece and parcel of 359.442 sq.ft., undivided right, title and interest over the land in Schedule A Property Conveyed to the Purchaser herein. **SCHEDULE 'C'PROPERTY** (Residential Apartment which is the subject matter of this Agreement of Sale) All that piece and parcel of Residential Flat bearing No.301 on the SECOND FLOOR in apartment building known as "VENSA LAKEVIEW" being constructed over Schedule "A" Property with a Super Built Area of 1,269 square feet consisting of TWO Bedroom, One Hall, Dining Hall, Kitchen, Two Bathroom, Balcony and flooring with Tiles, Water, Electricity and Sanitary facilities with one Reserved Car Parking space in the Stilt Floor. East by : Open to Sky, West by : Corridor, North by : Corridor & Open to sky, South by : Open to sky.

Reserve Price: Rs.70,20,000/- **EMD: Rs.7,02,000/-**

(16) Name and Address of the Borrowers: 1) Mr.BRM Hema Maheshwar 2) Mrs.M G Shubhamangala, Bajaj House,22A,Lane 2, Diamond Park, Near Wisdom World School.Wakad, Pune-411057.

Demand Notice: 18-12-2018 **Possession Notice: 20-05-2019**

Outstanding Amount: Rs.71,36,362/- (Rupees Seventy One Lakh Thirty Six Thousand Three Hundred and Sixty Two Only) as on 02-08-2023 +Applicable interest and thereon w.e.f. 02-08-2023 plus Incidental Expenses, Charges and costs (less further payments , if any).

Property Details: All that piece and parcel of Property bearing Site Nos.55,59,62,66,56,57,64,65,58,60,61 and 63, V.P Katha Nos.1217/55,1221/59,1224/62,1228/66,1218/56,1219/57,1226/64,1227/65, 1220/58,1222/60,1223/61 &1225/63 respectively, Presently bears clubbed common Katha No.1218/56-1219/57-1220/58-1222/60-1223/61-1227/65-12, SI.No.150200101500401329, situated in the layout Known as "BR Valley Park" formed in converted Sy.Nos.48/1,48/2,48/3,48/4 and 49/2 {the land bearing Sy Nos.48/1 & 48/2 is converted by the office of the Special Deputy Commissioner Vide Official Memorandum dated 31/03/2009, bearing No.ALN (A) (K and A) SR:398/07-08, and land bearing Sy.No.48/3 & 48/4, is converted by the office of the Special Deputy Commissioner Vide Official Memorandum dated 11/11/2010, bearing No.ALN (A) (A) SR:41/10-11, and land bearing Sy.No.49/2, is converted by the office of the Special Deputy Commissioner Vide Official Memorandum dated 31/03/2009 bearing No.ALN (A) (K and A) SR:397/07-08 for the measuring 32.08 Guntas and Official Memorandum dated 11/11/2010, bearing No.ALN (A) (A) SR:42/10-11 for the measuring 33.08 Guntas} and a layout approved by the Anekal Planning Authority vide No.APA/LAO/65/2010-11, dated 17/05/2011, situated at Balagaranahalli Village, Attibele Hobli, Anekal Taluk, Bangalore Rural District, and totally measures East to West 54.43 Mtrs and North to South 30 Mtrs, totally Measuring 1632.9 Sq.Mts or 17576.54 Sq.feet, the said Property presently physical Availability measuring about 1626.45 Sq.Mts or 17507.1078 Sq.feet with all rights, appurtenances whatsoever hereunder or underneath or above the surface and bounded on the East by: Road; West by: 3M Pathway and Park, North by: Road; South by: Road;

Schedule-"B": 345 Sq.ft. undivided right, title and interest in the immovable property mentioned in Schedule-"A" above.

Schedule-"C": Flat bearing No.310, Property ID No.150200101500420199, in the Third Floor, measuring about 1150 Sq.ft. super built up area, containing Two bed rooms, together with RCC Roofing, Vitrified flooring together with One covered car parking space,including proportionate share in common areas such as passages,lobbies,staircase, etc., in the multistoried residential building known as "PEACE PARK".

Reserve Price: Rs.30,25,000/- **EMD: Rs.3,02,500/-**

(17) Name and Address of the Borrowers: 1). Mr.BRM Hema Maheshwar 2).Mrs.M G Shubhamangala, Bajaj House,22A,Lane 2, Diamond Park, Near Wisdom World School.Wakad, Pune-411057.

Demand Notice: 18-12-2018 **Possession Notice: 20-05-2019**

Outstanding Amount: Rs.79,66,817/- (Rupees Seventy Nine Lakh Sixty Six Thousand Eight Hundred Seventeen Only Only) as on 02-08-2023 +Applicable interest and thereon w.e.f. 02-08-2023 plus Incidental Expenses, Charges and costs (less further payments , if any).

Property Details: All that piece and parcel of Property bearing Site Nos.55,59,62,66,56,57,64,65,58,60,61 and 63, V.P.Katha Nos.1217/55,1221/59,1224/62,1228/66,1218/56,1219/57,1226/64,1227/65, 1220/58,1222/60,1223/61 &1225/63 respectively, Presently bears clubbed common Katha No.1218/56-1219/57-1220/58-1222/60-1223/61-1227/65-12, SI.No.150200101500401329, situated in the layout Known as "BR Valley Park" formed in converted Sy.Nos.48/1, 48/2,48/3,48/4 and 49/2 {the land bearing Sy nos.48/1 & 48/ 2 is converted by the office of the Special Deputy Commissioner Vide Official Memorandum dated 31/03/2009, bearing No.ALN(A) (K and A) SR:398/07-08, and Land bearing Sy.No.48/3 & 48/4, is converted by the office of the Special Deputy Commissioner Vide Official Memorandum dated 11/11/2010, bearing No.ALN (A) (A) SR:41/10-11, and land bearing Sy.No.49/2, is converted by the office of the Special Deputy Commissioner Vide Official Memorandum dated 31/03/2009, bearing No.ALN(A)(K and A) SR:397/07-08 for the measuring 32.08 Guntas and Official Memorandum dated 11/11/2010, bearing No.ALN (A) (A) SR:42/10-11 for the measuring 33.08 Guntas} and a layout approved by the Anekal Planning Authority vide No.APA/LAO/65/2010-11, dated 17/05/2011, situated at Balagaranahalli Village, Attibele Hobli, Anekal Taluk, Bangalore Rural District, and totally measures East to West: 54.43 Mtrs and North to South: 30 Mtrs, totally Measuring 1632.9 Sq.Mts or 17576.54 Sq.feet, the said Property presently physical Availability measuring about 1626.45 Sq.Mts or 17507.1078 Sq.feet with all rights, appurtenances whatsoever hereunder or underneath or above the surface and bounded on the East by: Road; West by: 3M Pathway and Park, North by: Road; South by: Road;

Schedule-"B": 345 Sq.feet undivided right, title and interest in the immovable property mentioned in Schedule-"A" above.

Schedule-"C": Flat bearing No.309, Property ID No.150200101 500420163, in the Third Floor, measuring about 1150 Sq.ft. super built up area, containing Two bed rooms, together with RCC Roofing, Vitrified flooring together with One covered car parking space, including proportionate share in common areas such as passages, lobbies, staircase, etc., of the multistoried residential building known as "PEACE PARK".

Reserve Price: Rs.29,50,000/- **EMD: Rs.2,95,000/-**

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer Website of IDBI Bank Ltd i.e. **https://www.idbibank.in/e-auction.asp** The auction will be conducted through the Bank's approved service provider M/s.4 Closure at the web portals (www.foreclosureindia.com & www.bankauctions.in). E-Auction Tender Document containing online E-Auction bid cum declaration form, Price Confirmation Letter, Detailed Terms and Conditions of online auction sale are available in website (**www.foreclosureindia.com** & **www.bankauctions.in**) or for any other assistance email to info@bankauctions.in, Contact No's:+91-8142000061/62/64. Banks Contact Numbers: - **1. Pradip Sutradhar**-080-61451322/24 **2. Vithal Koteswara Rao**-080-45359607 **3. Nirmal Chand D**-080-45359608 **4. Vageesha Javali** – 080-4539618.. Email Id: recovery.bangalore@idbi.co.in. If the bid placed in the last 5 minutes before the closing of E-auction the bidding time will get auto extended by 5 minutes.

The Authorized Officer has absolute right to accept or reject the tender or bid, any or all the offers and has right to cancel or adjourn or postpone the auction without assigning any reason and also to modify any terms and conditions of this sale, without any prior notice.

The borrowers/guarantors/mortgagors are hereby notified to pay the sum as mentioned above along with upto date interest and ancillary expenses before the date of Auction, failing which the property will be auctioned/sold and balance dues, if any, will be recovered with interest and cost.

Place: Bengaluru **Sd/- Authorised Officer**
Date: 29.12.2024 **IDBI Bank Limited**

Andhra Pradesh CM N Chandrababu Naidu has said the role of Telugu stalwarts in drafting the Indian Constitution is noteworthy. He was speaking after releasing the 2025 calendar with portraits of eminent Telugus who played a pivotal role in drafting the Constitution

Varsity rape case: Madras HC orders SIT probe

Court tells govt to pay ₹25L compensation to survivor, says actions of victim-shaming & blaming kill soul of woman

R SIVAKUMAR @Chennai

THE Madras High Court on Saturday ordered the constitution of a special investigation team (SIT) comprising three women IPS officers to probe the rape of an engineering student on the Anna University campus and the leakage/disclosure of the FIR and its contents. However, the court declined to order a CBI probe as sought by the petitioners.

A division bench of Justices SM Subramaniam and V Lakshminarayanan, sitting in a special session, passed the orders while disposing of two public interest litigation (PIL) petitions filed by advocate R Varalakshmi (AIADMK) and A Mohandas (BJP).

"This court found several lapses both on the part of the police officials and the Anna University administration and formed an opinion that the investigation must be handed over to the SIT," the bench said.

Ordering the state to pay ₹25 lakh as interim compensation to the survivor, who was subjected to the twin trauma of sexual assault and the leak of the FIR and her identity, the court directed the university to ensure that she completes her education in the same institution without having to pay any fees. The bench said the interim compensation has to be recovered from the officials who are responsible and accountable for leaking the FIR and also directed departmental action against those officials.

The bench directed the state government to take a call and initiate 'all appropriate action' against Commissioner of Police Arun, if required, for "disclosing the vital details" of the investigation when it was in its initial stages, at a press conference, which, the court said, was unwarranted and held without obtaining prior permission from the government.

"The complaint and the FIR could have been drafted in such a way as to protect the dignity of the victim. It is the duty of the police official receiving the complaint to assist the victim by employing language that does not infringe her right to dignity. Using words/phrases that insinuate the woman's character and berate her dignity is uncalled for. This could have been avoided by an appropriate choice of words without violating her right to dignity," the bench said.

Commenting that the university administration has paved the way for security breaches, the bench said a large number of CCTV cameras were lying dysfunctional. "Further, free access of third parties inside the university campus is also a security lapse," it added. The court also wanted the internal complaints committee to be strengthened with individuals having proven expertise and efficiency.

The bench said actions of victim-shaming and blaming kill the soul of a woman, and no one deserves this kind of treatment. "It is high time that society positions itself in the shoes of a woman. Do only men have wishes here? Why can't a woman wish to fall in love without societal judgements? Why can't a woman wish to walk by herself at night without fear? Why can't a woman wish to talk to her male friends and colleagues freely without being judged? Why can't a woman wish to dress the way she wants without being shamed? It was never the fault of the woman; it has always been society that has dictated her life," it stated.

Advocate-General (AG) PS Raman, representing the state, stoutly denied the allegation that the police had leaked the FIR details. He said it was caused by a 'technical glitch', as intimated by the National Informatics Centre, due to the transition from IPC to BNS.

Ramadoss clashes with son over PMK post for grandson

T MURUGANANDHAM & BAGALAVAN PERIER
@ Chennai/Villupuram

A public spat broke out between PMK founder S Ramadoss and his son and party president Anbumani Ramadoss on Saturday over the appointment of Parasuraman Mukundan, grandson of Ramadoss, as the party's new youth wing president. Mukundan is the son of Ramadoss's elder daughter Gandhimathi.

When senior Ramadoss announced the appointment of Mukundan at the special general council meeting held at Pattannur in Villupuram district, Anbumani intervened, stating that Mukundan had joined the party only four months ago and lacked the experience to hold such a post. A visibly angered Ramadoss responded by asserting that the party was founded by him and that his decision is final.

GKM Thamizhkumaran, son of GK Mani, the party's honorary president, resigned as president of the youth wing last year. The post was previously held by Anbumani Ramadoss himself.

"Those who don't adhere to my words cannot continue in the party. Let them quit," Ramadoss declared and urged the party functionaries present to applaud the appointment of Mukundan.

The public spat continued with Anbumani taking the microphone to announce that he had established a new party office at Panaiyur. Publicly sharing the office's telephone number, Anbumani invited party cadres to meet him in the new office. After the general council meeting concluded, Anbumani Ramadoss reached Panaiyur in the evening. PMK sources reported that senior functionaries held discussions with Ramadoss following the incident and were likely to meet Anbumani to pacify him.

Office-bearers and functionaries who participated in the general council meeting sought to downplay the incident, calling it a minor event, and expressed confidence that all issues would be resolved by the evening.

PMK functionaries who attended the meeting told *TNIE* that they had sensed differences between the father and son even during their separate speeches at the meeting, which culminated in the argument at the end.

During his speech, Ramadoss indicated that the party had erred on alliance issues in the Lok Sabha election.

"In the 2026 Assembly elections, the front in which the PMK is a partner will secure power. I will take care of the alliance for thepolls," Ramadoss added.

'Spiritual salvation': Four end life in TN suicide pact

RAJALAKSHMI SAMPATH
@ Tiruvannamalai

FOUR people, including a woman and her two children, were found dead at a private farmhouse along the Girivalam path in Tiruvannamalai on Saturday in a suspected suicide pact for 'spiritual emancipation'. Police recovered a 20-page handwritten suicide note and video recordings on mobile phones documenting their actions leading up to the incident from the spot.

The deceased have been identified as Shri Mahakaala Vyasar (40), K Rukmani Priya (45), and her two children, K Jalandhari (17) and Mukund Aakash Kumar (12), all residents of Vyasarpadi in Chennai. According to police, Rukmani Priya, a divorcee, and her two children had been closely associated with Mahakaala Vyasar, a self-styled spiritual guide, over the past few months. Bonding through a shared interest in spirituality, they had been travelling together to various pilgrimage centres, sources said.

Mahakaala Vyasar, who declared himself to be an intermediary of Goddess Amman, claimed to communicate with deities during meditation and often spoke about achieving 'spiritual salvation', police said. Rukmani Priya was deeply influenced by Vyasar's teachings and actively participated in his spiritual practices.

The group, regular visitors to the Karthigai Deepam festival in Tiruvannamalai, attended the festival earlier this year. After returning to Chennai, they revisited Tiruvannamalai last Friday, claiming they had been called by Lord Annamalaiyar and Goddess Mahalakshmi to attain salvation.

On Friday, the group checked into a hotel along the Girivalam path around 2pm. Later that evening, they requested the hotel staff to extend their stay by one more day. When repeated knocks on their room door went unanswered on Saturday morning, the staff alerted the Tiruvannamalai Taluk Police.

A police team, led by Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) Sathish Kumar, broke the lock and entered the room, where they found the lifeless bodies of the four. ASP Sathish Kumar said, "The suicide note and videos recovered from the spot confirm that the four ended their lives as part of a spiritual pursuit."

Quoting the suicide note, police said the children had been manipulated into 'joining' the ritual by their mother, who stated that in her absence their safety could not be guaranteed under their father's care.

The note further requested that their bodies not be handed over to their families. Instead, they wished to be buried locally in Tiruvannamalai by an NGO or the police. Investigators believe the note was primarily written by the two adults.

PAYING HOMAGE

Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah pays his last respects to former PM Dr Manmohan Singh in New Delhi on Saturday | EXPRESS

Suspense over RTC strike in K'taka continues

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

THE meeting that was supposed to be held on Friday by the Labour Commissioner to resolve the issues faced by the employees of road transport corporations, following the call for an indefinite strike from December 31, has been postponed to Monday (December 30).

The Joint Action Committee (JAC), involving members from Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC), Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC), Kalyana Karnataka Road Transport Corporation (KKRTC) and North-Western Karnataka Road Transport Corporation (NWKRTC), has called for a strike over the government not fulfilling their demands.

The members said that under the leadership of trade union leader HV Anantha Subbarao, they wanted to give a representation to the labour department. A member, on condition of anonymity, said they are angry with the government for not considering their long-standing demand for clearing Rs 1,750 crore pending arrears.

However, a source at the government level said the transport department disbursed Rs 224.05 crore towards gratuity and earned leave encashment to 11,694 retired employees. The dues pending since January 1, 2020, were disbursed by Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy on December 21, and the gratuity and earned leave encashment were some of the demands put forth by the JAC.

"The government has already sent feelers to union members that it will listen to them and efforts will be made again to convince them to withdraw the strike call. The government will remind them about the recently disbursed Rs 224.05 crore and seek their cooperation as the protest will inconvenience the public on December 31 as it is the year-end," said a senior official.

BJP ACCUSES GOVT OF PUSHING RTCS INTO BANKRUPTCY

BENGALURU: Opposition BJP accused Karnataka government of pushing the state transport corporation into bankruptcy. State BJP unit general secretary P Rajiv said that during a meeting chaired by the Chief Secretary, it was decided that a proposal would be submitted for a 15 % hike in bus fares. Rajiv alleged that the government is also planning to sell 200 acres of land belonging to the transport corporation to mobilise funds. It is very unfortunate that Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy, who claims that the corporations are making a profit, has not understood the financial condition of the corporation, he said. The BJP would extend its full support to the transport corporation employees strike, he said. The BJP leader said the government is yet to clear Rs 1,180 crore dues towards the Shakti scheme for 2023-24 and Rs 607 crore dues for 2024-25.

EXPRESS READ

Vaikunta Dwara Darshan: Only ticketed, tokened devotees allowed

TIRUMALA: Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams Executive Officer J Syamala Rao elaborated on the arrangements for the Srivari Vaikunta Dwara Darshan, announcing that only devotees with tickets or tokens will be allowed for the darshan from January 10-19. Speaking during the monthly Dial your EO programme at Annamayya Bhavan in Tirumala on Saturday, he stated that TTD has made elaborate preparations for the upcoming mega event. The EO confirmed that 91 counters have been arranged, with 87 in Tirupati and four at Tirumala, to issue darshan tokens to devotees. He clarified that devotees must bring their original Aadhaar cards to book tokens. ENS

Man fakes as cop during Pawan's tour

ENS @ Parvathipuram-Manyam

THE police on Saturday arrested a 41-year-old man for impersonating as an IPS officer during Andhra Pradesh DyCM Pawan Kalyan's visit to Parvathipuram-Manyam district. The accused is Balivada Surya Prakash. Police seized ID cards, a mobile phone, a laptop, a car, and police uniforms and name plate from him.

Additional SP Dilip Kiran said Prakash returned after working two years as a sepoy in Punjab Regiment in 2005. Later, he obtained licence as a repairer of weighing machines from Legal Metrology Department. The Additional SP said Prakash developed disputes with the villagers over his ancestral property. He went to Hyderabad in January 2024 informing his relatives that he was selected as an IPS officer. In pursuance of a plan to settle the land disputes in the guise of a police officer, he took part in the official visit of Pawan Kalyan to Bagujola on December 20. He took photos with the police to dupe his relatives as an IPS officer.

After seeing his photographs, several community leaders felicitated Prakash in Salur believing that he became as IPS officer.

Man held for sharing video of woman hurling slipper at TN CM Stalin poster

CHENNAI: Greater Chennai Police on Saturday registered a case against a Kanniyakumari-based man and an unknown elderly woman in connection with a video where she is seen throwing a slipper on a poster of TN CM MK Stalin pasted on a pillar of Chennai Metro rail. According to police sources, once the video of the act started doing the rounds on social media, a complaint was filed by DMK MLA Prabhakar Raja saying it would hurt sentiments and damage public tranquillity. He filed the complaint against the woman and the man, identified as Prathees, who had shared the video. Sources said after FIR was filed, a special team travelled to Kanniyakumari and arrested Prathees to bring him to Chennai.

FORMULA-E RACE CASE

KTR: I'm not to blame for procedural irregularities

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Hyderabad

CHALLENGING the ACB case in the alleged Formula-E race irregularities, former municipal administration minister **KT Rama Rao** in his affidavit contended that the FIR was registered without conducting a preliminary inquiry as mandated by law.

He further argued that there was 14 months delay in lodging complaint and the sole intention was to defame him and exacting political revenge.

"The FIR does not disclose any prima facie evidence of commission of an offense, and the allegations are fabricated to tarnish my reputation," Rama Rao stated. He further noted that the alleged beneficiary of the supposed wrongful gain was not named as an accused in the FIR.

Responding to allegations of financial mismanagement, the BRS working president clarified that the agreement for hosting the Formula-E Race Season 10 event was approved following due procedures. He pointed out that the Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority (HMDA), an independent legal entity, was designated as the promoter and host for the event after the private sponsor failed to fulfil its financial obligations.

Rama Rao explained that payments for the event were structured in three installments and required approvals, which were obtained before the model code of conduct (MCC) came into force on October 9, 2023. Any procedural irregularities in the execution of the agreement were the responsibility of the officers concerned and not him, he asserted.

He refuted claims that the payments violated the MCC, noting that no notice was issued by the Election Commission of India in this regard. He said after October 9, 2023, he ceased to hold authority over the matter, as the MCC had rendered him functus officio.

The affidavit underscored the economic impact of the Formula-E Season 9 event held in February 2023, which reportedly generated USD 83 million in revenue for the state, as per a Nielsen Sports analysis.

DEMOCRACY THRIVES

Kerala's women electorate 2nd highest in India

MS VIDYANANDAN @ T'puram

KERALA is now the state with the second-highest electoral gender ratio in India. At 1,43,36,133, women constitute 51.56% of Kerala's total electorate, showed the data set brought out by the Election Commission of India recently. Among 36 states and UTs in the data set, Puducherry had the highest share of women electors (53.03%).

At 52.09%, Kerala was third in the percentage of votes polled by women over total votes in the 2024 Lok Sabha election, behind Puducherry (53.2%) and Arunachal Pradesh (52.22%). Voter turnout among women in Kerala the LS polls was 71.86%, a distant 17th position in the data set. The highest women voter turnout was in Lakshadweep (85.46%), followed by Assam (81.71%). The national average was 65.78%. Kerala ranked 14th in overall voter turnout (72.04%).

The exceptional gender balance translates into robust female voter participation, with 52.09% of the total votes by women. The notable achievement reflects the success of sustained efforts through targeted campaigns

Chief Electoral Office, Kerala

The state had the second highest 'elector density' in the country. The average number of electors per polling station in Kerala in the 2024 election was 1,102, while Delhi was at the top with 1,115 electors per booth. Kerala had the highest number of NRI electors in male, female and transgender categories. Of the 89,839 NRI electors in Kerala, males constituted 83,765, females 6,065 and transgenders nine. Of the total 13 transgender NRI electors in India, nine were from Kerala, two from Andhra Pradesh and one each from Telangana and Karnataka.

Within Kerala, Vadakara Lok Sabha constituency had the most NRI electors (34,918), followed by Ponnani (9,960). Only 2,670 of NRI electors, including 271 women, in Kerala voted in the 2024 Lok Sabha election. Highest number of NRIs voted in Vadakara (1,572), followed by Kasaragod (572) and Kozhikode (116).

Not a single NRI voter turned up in eight constituencies, including Wayanad and Ernakulam.

"Your nationalism must not be divorced from rationalism. Emotion is good... but conviction is better

Tej Bahadur Sapru

2025: A YEAR THAT DEFIES PREDICTIONS

THE THIRD EYE

SHANKKAR AIYAR

Author of *The Gated Republic, Aadhaar: A Biometric History of India's 12 Digit Revolution,* and *Accidental India*

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IT is tough to make predictions, especially about the future. Yogi Berra's observation has stood the test of time. Last December, this column had defined 2023 as 'the year that failed forecasts'. Predictions for 2024 did not fare better. Unlike in ancient times, the future is not divined from the intestines of animals, but from the innards of data. But the prognostications are as random as they were in that era.

Across domains, forecasts were disconnected from reality. In December 2023, the Reserve Bank of India found growth resilient and robust, and estimated the GDP would increase at 7-plus percent. That was not to be. In the stock markets, forecasts for the Nifty50 ranged between 20,000 and a high of 25,000. The Nifty50 crossed 26,100 in September, but has slid to around 23,000. Unfazed punters are now predicting the Nifty50 at 28,000 by December 2025.

The experts on Wall Street did no better. In January 2024, the street expected benchmark index S&P500 to range between 4,200 and 5,400. The index closed at 6,086 on December 24—over 600 points above the highest estimate. Never mind the blushes. This December, Wall Street is predicting a range between 4,600 and 7,400, and Apple is expected to be the first company to achieve a market value of $4 trillion.

In 2024, a year of elections, predictions on election outcomes didn't pass muster either. In the world's largest democracy, the BJP stopped well short of predicted targets and in the world's oldest democracy, despite the "too close to call" theories of pollsters, Donald J Trump decimated Kamala Harris and achieved the trifecta winning the presidency and the two Houses of Congress.

Trump's victory has upended formulaic two-by-two charting and SWOT analysis of the future. Stock markets are yo-yoing—foreign investors have dumped Indian stocks worth over ₹1 trillion. Currencies are tumbling—the rupee has crossed 85.58 to the dollar and the yen is at 157 on speculation and fears.

His utterances, choice of cabinet and ruling by social media posts approach renders 2025 a year that defies predictions. Mark Twain famously said history doesn't repeat, but it does rhyme. But open-ended question is: rhyme with which era, which crises? The spectrum of global issues—geo-economics, geopolitics, climate alliances—all are predicated on the ideological zeal and whims of one man.

The chaos is vivid across the advanced nations. There is the economic aspect and then there is the geopolitical aspect. Trump has threatened to reclaim the Panama Canal, suggested invasion of Mexico to attack cartels, wants to buy out Greenland and called Canada the 51st state of the US.

Meanwhile, the World Bank has advised China to undertake deeper reforms as its economy continues to be in a major slump and is dumping goods. As for alternative markets, the two largest economies of Europe—Germany and France—are teetering on the edge of political and economic crises.

It promises to get worse. Trump has assured his MAGA base that he will address immigration, ramp up tariffs and cut taxes in that sequence as he takes over on January 20—add the Elon Musk-Vivek Ramaswamy-led DOGE initiative. The immigration issue has widened from deportation of illegals to include H1-B visas. How this plays out will impact India's IT services—currently the largest exports and private formal employers.

His threat to impose tariffs—on China, Canada and Mexico—will disrupt supply chains, pricing and inflation. There is a notion that India is immune to the tariff threats. Fact is, just last week, Trump threatened reciprocal tariffs on India, stating, "If they tax us, we tax them the same amount." This matters, as India's exports to the US now tote up to over $77 billion and American investors are owners of Indian shares.

Trump has also promised to extend the benefits of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act—and dangled a host of other cuts including on tips and senior citizens. The corporate tax cuts will trigger a flight of capital, affect flows of portfolio and direct investments to emerging economies such as India—the US is already the top recipient of investments, with total private flows of $220 billion as of October 2024.

It has been argued that Trump's threats are negotiating tactics. It is also true that Trump's promises seem incoherent give his choice of team. It is also manifest that the MAGA base is not a homogenous unit, as validated by 38 Republican members of Congress voting against Trump's wishes last week. Even on H1B visa, there is a rift between the anti-immigration MAGA right and the DOGE faction of MAGA advocating induction of skilled workers. Hope is not a strategy. All said and done, the encounters underline that there will be dramatic episodes. Uncertainty is the new certainty.

The unpredictability caused by Trump matters. India is at an inflection point. The slide in GDP growth to 5.4 percent is grave, especially in the face of Trumponomics. Given its demography, 7 percent GDP growth should be the floor, not the ceiling. India's transformation has been propelled by crises. The list of unattended structural reforms is long. The challenge of Trumponomics should be a wakeup call for the central and state governments. For years, India's political class has built a strong consensus on weak reforms. This consensus must be dismantled if we aspire for a Viksit Bharat.

WHY ARE RICH INDIANS DESERTING INDIA?

POWER & POLITICS

PRABHU CHAWLA

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DONALD Trump's aide Laura Loomer may describe Indians as "Third World invaders", but the world is rolling out the red carpet for them. Rich Indians, having emotionally seceded from their country for some time now, are moving bag, baggage and business out of India, joining an elite international set.

For rich Indians, home is no longer where the heart is. India, for them, is now no better than real estate, subject to high levels of taxation with no commensurate public services to benefit from. For these fast upwardly mobile personalities, India is turning into an urban volcano ready to erupt. Whether it is superstars from the world of glamour or sports, these New Rich Indians of no fixed address have chosen the West and the Middle East as their final destination.

Joining this global superset is cricketer Virat Kohli and his wife, actor Anushka Sharma, and their children. According to reliable sources, most top Bollywood actors have already bought property in England, Singapore and Dubai, and they visit India only for work and very little leisure. There is hardly a corporate leader from India who doesn't own a home abroad. According to the Henley Private Wealth Migration Report 2024, 4,300 millionaires will leave India by the end of this year. Last year, 5,100 of them moved their homes from India.

Ironically, as India is heading towards becoming the world's third largest economy with a GDP of $5 trillion, the beneficiaries of India's growth story have chosen to dump their motherland and become part of the Delhi-Mumbai-Singapore-Dubai-London-New York power corridor.

It has now become fashionable for the Indian glitterati and chatterati to boast about their expansive homes in the UAE, Thailand, Bali, London and south of France, and lament about the worsening living conditions in Indian cities. The priciest apartments in Mayfair, London, are now owned by Indians who run telecom companies, airlines and steel plants in India.

Since technology has converted the entire world in to a tiny global village, Indians are running their empires more comfortably and without fear, from Trump Tower in New York to the Technology and Financial Park in Singapore. In fact, second homes in various cities abroad are used by high net worth Indians to host periodic review meetings with senior executives who are flown out from India in chartered flights, never mind the carbon footprint.

SOURAV ROY

What is more worrisome is the rising trend of Indians renouncing their citizenship. It means they have chosen to disconnect from their roots and opt for an entirely new social and cultural ecosystem. According to statistics shared by the external affairs minister in parliament last year, over 16 lakh Indians have surrendered their citizenship since 2011. Their number rose sharply from just 85,256 to 2,25,620 last year. The minister also disclosed that Indians have taken up citizenships in 135 countries, which indicates that most of them just want to leave India at any cost and settle in any other part of the world.

Affluent Indian families are easily charmed by investments for citizenships offered by Caribbean nations Antigua and Barbuda, and Spain as well as the 'golden visa' from Greece and the UAE. Numerous advisory firms have popped up in India whose only expertise is to help upwardly mobile young entrepreneurs in finding a suitable home abroad along with a highly profitable business with minimum problems. They have devised innovative methods to use liberal schemes under which each Indian can remit $2,50,000 annually to invest anywhere in the world. Surprisingly, these consultative agencies have been able to successfully thwart the Indian government's attractive ecosystem for 'ease of doing business' in India.

The competitive craze to flee stems from various economic, social, governance and cultural issues. Despite growing at 6.5 percent annually, India hasn't been able to provide a good quality of life. India has added over one lakh kilometres of national highways during the past decade. It has constructed over 100 new airports. There is a stupendous increase in the number of universities, medical colleges, research institutions, new startups and unicorns, but none of these has dented the desire to move out. Losing a few lakh Indians out of a nation of 1.40 billion people is not a big deal; yet, it is bad optics for India.

The primary reasons for many Indians leaving the country appear to be pathetic civic infrastructure, breakdown of law and order in many cities, suffocating pollution and a complex tax structure. For many professionals, working from office has become a nightmare. With a liberal auto policy meant to enhance supply, roads in 200 Indian cities are choked. India has perhaps the largest variety of vehicles dotting the roads—from cycles, e-rickshaws and three-wheelers to tractors, two wheelers and four wheelers. According to official estimates, India has 21 crore two-wheelers and 7 crore four-wheelers that clutter the roads, averaging one car per 10 adults. The average speed of a car in any big metropolis is just 5 km an hour. Overcrowding of Indian roads leads to major social and health related consequences. These vehicles spend more time on road emitting carbon fumes and also lead to many cases of road rage. Many office-goers miss flights and meetings because of unpredictable traffic hazards. India has the largest number of the world's most polluted cities.

If gridlocking of roads wasn't enough, total collapse of civic infrastructure, excessive and tormenting bureaucracy and administration has led to the flight of the both human intellect and capital. In almost all the cities, unauthorised construction as well as encroachment of public spaces like parks, playfields and even footpaths have made lives unbearable for health- and safety-conscious citizens. Footpaths have been turned into food marts. Yet, never has any senior civil servant or police official been taken to task for the breakdown of the system.

Citizens have to suffer even noisy sermons and prayers from mosques and temples without any decibel limits and the police fail to implement even the directions of the courts. The most powerful idea floated by the prime minister soon after he took over has been sabotaged from within. Though it has changed the mindset of the people who now walk the extra mile to ensure cleanliness, municipal authorities are conspicuous by their absence on the ground.

Moreover, with rulers indulging in competitive cacophony to protect their vote banks, it is the ordinary, law-abiding resident who is bearing the brunt. As the fight for identity and entitlement dictates the contours of national politics, good governance has become collateral casualty. Coupled with a tardy legal system and multiple tax authorities, for these aspirational Indians, India is becoming an unliveable habitat. Iqbal's song—"*Saare jahan se achchha, Hindustan hamara*"—has become a dream of the past. For the Indian establishment, it's a big challenge to retain both the talent and the wealth for a viksit and surakshit Bharat.

WOMEN RULED THE YEAR IN INDIE FILMS

OPINION

NAMRATA JOSHI

Consulting Editor

Follow her on X @Namrata_Joshi

SOMETHING unusual happened at the movies for me at the very start of 2024. An imperturbable film buff that I consider myself, for the first time in my life I walked out of a Hindi film at the interval. It felt like an unbearable confinement, a waste of precious hours on an entity that offered neither any delight and insight, nor nourishment for the aesthetic urges of the soul. As the year ends, *Fighter* features among the top 10 Hindi grossers; it's a different matter whether it got enough return on investment or not.

The dominant trend of past few years in Bollywood continued into 2024. A handful of largely execrable films minted vulgar crores, and the deserving ones got "discovered" later on OTT platforms, ensuring that the balance of power at the box office continued to favour the mediocre moneybags than the daring visionaries, as it always has.

Of the mainstream Hindi cinema I watched, the one which was satisfying, with quibbles intact, was Imtiaz Ali's musical *Amar Singh Chamkila*, the biopic of Punjab's popular performer of "naughty songs". Atul Sabharwal's *Berlin*—about a plot to assassinate Russian president Boris Yeltsin on his visit to India in 1993—is a spy thriller riding on atmosphere and intrigue.

In the times of unabashedly hypermasculine portrayals in the so-called pan-Indian cinema, it was gratifying to find the year's Bollywood crown claimed by the utterly fallible but likeable and vulnerable man next door, Rajkumar Rao—with *Srikanth, Mr and Mrs Mahi, Vicky Vidya Ka Woh Wala Video*—and with his *Stree 2* turning out to be an all-time blockbuster. Dinesh Vijan's production house Maddock Films owned 2024, delivering the ghostly *Stree 2* and *Munjya*, and robot romcom *Teri Baaton Mein Aisa Uljha Jiya*.

However, the best bit about 2024 has been the terrific women-centric films in the alternative circuit, many of them directed by women. It has been an incredible year for India's indie female filmmakers, starting with Shuchi Talati's *Girls Will Be Girls* winning an audience award at Sundance, while its lead actress, Preeti Panigrahi, bagged the special jury award for acting.

Enough has deservedly been written about Payal Kapadia's *All We Imagine As Light*, which created history for India by winning the Grand Prix at Cannes and has subsequently won every possible foreign award despite being snubbed by the Film Federation selection panel for Kiran Rao's *Laapataa Ladies* as India's entry at the Oscars.

Rima Das's sequel to her acclaimed 2017 Assamese film, *Village Rockstars 2*, bagged the Kim Jeseok award at Busan. Lakshmipriya Devi's Manipuri film *Boong* played in Toronto and went on to win the best youth film prize at the Asia Pacific Screen Awards in Australia. Subhadra Mahajan's *Second Chance* premiered at Karlovy Vary and Nidhi Saxena's *Sad Letters of an Imaginary Woman* did so at Busan.

While mediocre moneybags ruled the box office, women filmmakers wowed the alternative circuit. Apart from Payal Kapadia, works by Shuchi Talati, Rima Das, Lakshmipriya Devi and Subhadra Mahajan were received well around the world

In the world of documentaries, *Nocturnes*, co-directed by Anupama Srinivasan and Anirban Dutta, won a special jury award at Sundance and Nishtha Jain's *Farming the Revolution* was the best international feature at Hot Docs.

The irony is that while these films have had the whole world as their playground, Indian audiences have not quite warmed up to them—a proper release here is still an uphill task.

The best Bengali film this year, debut directorial of Abhinandan Banerjee, *Manikbabur Megh*, did manage to break the jinx with a successful limited commercial release.

Dominic Sangma's ideologically grounded, deeply humane Garo film *Rapture* came home through community-based screenings in Meghalaya.

A late discovery for me has been Aranya Sahay's extraordinarily layered *Humans in the Loop*, that brings AI and Adivasi reality together while taking us through a woman's attempts to mend her strained relationship with her adolescent daughter.

Another admirable woman on screen was the stoic yet subversive Sanjeevani, the widow of a farmer who died by suicide, in Kinshuk Surjan's *Marching in the Dark*, a documentary.

PS Vinothraj's Tamil film *Kottukkaali* was a brilliant study of opposing forms of anger—one explosive and the other silent. Another Tamil film to hit the sweet spot was C Prem Kumar's *Meiyazhagan*, with Arvind Swamy's inward-looking cynicism meeting its match in Karthi's open-hearted sense of inclusiveness.

Christo Tomy's Malayalam film *Ullozhukku*, about two women who confront betrayals and rise above to find support in each other, had Urvashi and Parvathy Thiruvothu acing it. Thiruvothu was also one of the prime movers in the Women in Cinema Collective, which pushed for the Hema Committee to be set up to expose violations against women in the industry.

QUOTE CORNER

A judge's life is not one of great sacrifices, but one that involves small acts of self-control everyday both while on the bench and off of it, in terms of what one says and how one reacts. I will say that those who cannot exercise that restraint and self-control must never accept judgeship.

Justice B V Nagarathna of the Supreme Court in an interview

I am very honoured and happy because I love her work so much! I saw her movie, and for me, it was a big revelation.

Alice Rohrwacher, Italian film director, after Payal Kapadia called her *Happy as Lazzaro* the best film of the century

According to my dream, I may live 110 years.

Dalai Lama, 89 years old this year, on concerns about his health

MAILBAG WRITE TO letters@newindianexpress.com

Silent strength

Ref: *Ablest helmsman in troubled waters* (Dec 28). Manmohan Singh is often referred to as the 'silent prime minister' due to his calm and composed demeanour, as well as his tendency to avoid making provocative statements. Despite being in politics for several decades, he preferred to focus on policy and governance. This approach has sometimes been seen as a weakness. However, it has also been praised as a strength, allowing Singh to build consensus and work behind the scenes to achieve his goals.

Lawrence Vadukut, Manalur

Divisive comment

We lost a great economist. But what is unfortunate is Jairam Ramesh's statement that by not allowing Manmohan Singh to be cremated by the Yamuna, the government deliberately insulted a Sikh prime minister. Is he trying to stir up religious sentiments? P V Narasimha Rao, who brought Singh into the cabinet, was insulted before and after his death by his own party. Looks like the Congress has inherited the 'divide and rule' strategy from the British.

A R K Raju, Visakhapatnam

Two geniuses

India lost two geniuses in quick succession. While Kerala was bidding adieu to master storyteller M T Vasudevan, the nation fell into deep sorrow at the passing of Manmohan Singh. Both quietly worked for the nation. May their souls rest in peace.

P P Sahadevan, Nileshwar

Profound hypocrisy

Ref: *The year the west normalised genocide* (Dec 28). Powerful nations expose their hypocrisy by ignoring the mass killing. They claim to defend human rights but remain silent when innocent civilians are systematically destroyed, revealing their profound moral bankruptcy and exposing a shameful double standard that betrays every principle of international justice.

Shivani Ram K, Bengaluru

Balancing AI

Ref: *The demise of the college lecture foretold* (Dec 28). AI's role in transforming education is impressive, making learning accessible and efficient. However, human interaction in teaching remains vital, especially in creative and practical fields. Balancing AI and human mentorship is the key to the future of education.

Heraa Aslam, Bangalore

Christmas concert

Ref: *Time to strike new-age notes in Carnatic music* (Dec 28). On the morning of Christmas day, T M Krishna performed to standing ovation at the Madras Music Academy. When he sang a freedom song written by Perumal Murugan, it was appreciated by one and all. To hear such a concert is the treasured ambition of common rasigas.

G Purushothaman, Tirunelveli

Dress sense

T M Krishna may be against casteism in Carnatic music. But his appearance on stage in a lungi does not speak well of him. It is disrespect shown to the goddesses of music. Will he perform in churches and mosques singing songs in praise of Lord Muruga wearing kacham vastram?

Sravana Ramachandran, Chennai

Dam ethics

As a geologist, I am disturbed to hear of a new dam China is planning to build on the Brahamaputra in its lower reaches, which falls in a well-known active seismic zone. Geo-ethics demands that any such major construction be avoided, however small the likelihood of a future hazard. There are populous areas of human inhabitation in India and other countries close to this location.

D Vasudevan, Chennai

Other news

It was really interesting to read about journalists sharing their experiences of tricky situations "which otherwise go unnoticed". Thank you, *TNIE*, for providing some space for news behind the news.

Ramachandran T V, Pilathara

THE NEW SUNDAY EXPRESS

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POSTS OF THE DAY

Piyush Goyal @PiyushGoyal
History is witness to the numerous instances when Congress not only humiliated Dr Singh, but also worked to ensure that real power remained firmly in the grip of the dynasty.

Priyanka Gandhi Vadra @priyankagandhi
This morning ... I saw Dr Manmohan Singh's family members struggling for a place at the funeral site, to find a place in the crowd, and the general public ... paying tribute from the road.

Arvind Kejriwal @ArvindKejriwal
The last rites of former PM Dr Manmohan Singh were performed at Nigam Bodh Ghat. Before this, the last rites of all the prime ministers were performed at Raj Ghat.

Ex-PM cremated with full state honours

President, top political leaders & several foreign dignitaries bid adieu to the architect of economic liberalisation

PREETHA NAIR @New Delhi

FORMER prime minister Manmohan Singh, widely known as the architect of economic liberalisation in the 1990s, was cremated with full state honors on Saturday in the presence of top dignitaries from the country and abroad.

Singh's funeral pyre was lit by his eldest daughter Upinder Singh at the Nigambodh Ghat, as family members, friends and dignitaries bid farewell to the former prime minister.

President Droupadi Murmu led the nation in paying last respects to the departed leader.

Priests and family members recited religious hymns from the holy Gurbani, while chants of 'Satnam Waheguru' filled the air, as Singh was cremated according to Sikh rituals.

At the Nigambodh Ghat, a sense of deep grief united the assembly featuring Murmu, Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union ministers and senior Congress leaders, including party president Mallikarjun Kharge, Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi.

King of Bhutan Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck and the foreign minister of Mauritius, Dhananjay Ramful, were among the foreign dignitaries who paid tributes to Singh.

The economist-turned-politician, who served as the prime minister from 2004 to 2014, died at the age of 92 years on the night of December 26.

(1) President Droupadi Murmu, PM Narendra Modi and Bhutan King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck during the state funeral of former PM Manmohan Singh at Nigambodh Ghat; (2 & 3) Singh's wife Gursharan Kaur and daughter Daman Singh pay last respects at the AICC office; (3) Sonia Gandhi pays tribute at Nigambodh Ghat; (4) the last journey, and (5) the cremation | PTI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Home Minister Amit Shah and Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla also paid their last tributes to the former prime minister and laid wreaths on his mortal remains.

Others who laid the wreaths included Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan and the chiefs of the tri-services; Chief ministers of the Congress-ruled states including Siddaramaiah (Karnataka), Revanth Reddy (Telangana) and Sukhwinder Singh Sukhu (Himachal Pradesh), along with Delhi CM Atishi and Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena.

Earlier in the day, Singh's body, placed in a flower-bedecked casket and carriage, was taken from his 3, Motilal Nehru residence in Lutyens' Delhi to the headquarters of the Congress party, which he represented in Parliament for 33 long years.

At the party office, Kharge, Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi, and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra paid tributes to him, as did thousands of Congress workers who had gathered to catch a last glimpse of Singh.

The former prime minister's final journey then started from the AICC office to the Nigambodh Ghat, where the procession reached around 11.30 am. A large crowd had gathered at both the AICC office and the Nigambodh Ghat.

Congress leader and Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi also accompanied the procession, sitting alongside Singh's relatives in an Army truck just ahead of the casket carrying Singh's mortal remains.

The Union home ministry has announced a seven-day national mourning, during which the national flag will be flown at half-mast across the nation.

> **The UK will always be proud of his invaluable partnership with three UK PMs, and proud of him as an alumnus of two of our great universities. My thoughts and wishes are with his family and the people of India**
>
> Lindy Cameron, British High Commissioner to India

> **It was difficult to see very much, beyond the backs of the heads of assorted dignitaries and close relatives of the departed soul. So it became more of an occasion to reflect on the life and legacy of the late great PM**
>
> Shashi Tharoor, Congress leader

Bhutan holds special prayers for MMS

Bhutan on Friday offered prayers for former Indian prime minister Manmohan Singh at a Buddhist monastery in Thimphu. Separate prayer ceremonies were held at all 20 districts of the Himalayan nation.

Mauritius flag at half mast to pay respect

Mauritius national flag flew half-mast at all its government offices and institutions till sunset on Saturday as a mark of respect to Dr Manmohan Singh. The Mauritius PM also urged the private sector to follow suit.

PV SINDHU & VENKATA DATTA SAI

SINDHU AND SAI: LOVE-GAME AND MATCH POINT

AJAY TOMAR & INDRANEEL DAS

MANDAR PARDIKAR

THEY say marriages are made in heaven. This surely matches one. By the admission of the bride and groom, it did bloom on a flight, mid-air.

When PV Sindhu ended her campaign at the Paris Olympics, it was far from ideal. She lost in the first knockout game of the event. After winning two back-to-back medals at the Olympics (Rio and Tokyo), this came as a big setback. Yet she looked composed meeting the assembled media, answering questions with her hallmark calmness. There was no inkling of an impending wedding bell. All she wanted was to take a break and then think about the future.

Just like her incredible retrievals from insane angles and corners, no one saw this coming. Like her drop shots, this was deceptive. About four months ago, Sindhu surprised the world when she announced her marriage through a social media post. The curiosity grew when the name of the fiance was announced. It was not some celebrity but an IT professional. Venkata Datta Sai is not from sports background either. By his own admission, managing the Delhi Capitals, the IPL team while working with JSW, was the closest he had come to sports. But as Sindhu's online post says quoting Khalil Gibran, "When love beckons to you, follow him, for love gives naught but itself." Love it is then.

Just weeks before the announcement, the double Olympic medallist unveiled the new logo of Posidex Technologies, where her now husband is an executive director. He is the son of GT Venkateshwar Rao, managing director at Posidex and a former member of the Indian Revenue Service. Sindhu's father PV Ramana told this newspaper that the two families were friends and had known each other for a long time. The company where Sai works deals in customer master data management solutions for leading banks and non-banking financial institutions.

The marriage grabbed headlines. Sindhu and Sai chose Udaipur, one of the iconic destination wedding locations in the country. They wanted to have a quiet and traditional wedding with the near and dear ones. One of the most celebrated sportspersons in India, who once topped Forbes' highest-earner (Olympic sports) charts, got married on December 22 with about 150 people in attendance. This was followed by a high-profile reception in Hyderabad.

"The selection of venue as Udaipur was the choice of bride and groom as they like the city," revealed Ramana. Organising the marriage and various other ceremonies within a month and crisscrossing the country to invite dignitaries, including the Prime Minister, had its own challenges. The couple and their families planned it to perfection. "Obviously it was challenging as many arrangements were needed to be done. But we did it all meticulously and did not leave any gap," said Ramana.

Their relationship started blossoming in October 2022. "We were family friends since about 2013 and reconnected on a flight," Sindhu told a TV channel just before marriage.

NEWSMAKER

"Once on the flight, we met and then we started talking." Sai, has his own take too. "Funnily enough, it was a Vistara flight from Hyderabad to Delhi," he had said. "I always tell people, she is the one who messaged me first and called me. After the Olympics, that's when we decided to get together."

Sindhu's father elaborated on the wedding. "We left for Udaipur on December 19 and returned to Hyderabad on December 23 evening. From the 19th to the 22nd, marriage and other functions took place." Ramana said the reception on December 24 in Hyderabad was a grand affair. "It was attended by around 7,000 people," he said. "On December 25 a special pooja was conducted for the bride and groom as per our tradition. Then on December 26, we went to Tirupati, Padmavati temple and on 27th morning, we went to the Tirumala Hills."

One of the most accomplished sportspersons in the country finally got hitched at the age of 29 after winning Olympic and world championship medals for India. Like she had said in Paris after the loss, "...just take some break and then come back and let's see what it is because four years (for the next Olympics) is a very, very long time." But for now, it's love-game and match point.

New norms for traffic at Myanmar border

MUKESH RANJAN @New Delhi

> **The pass holders will be allowed to enter the border area for visiting relatives, tourism, business, sports, official duty, border trade, treatments, attending seminars or conferences, and cultural exchange programmes**
>
> MHA official

43 crossing points

The entry will be regulated from 43 border crossing points where Assam Rifles personnel will issue passes. Eight pilot entry or exit points would be made functional immediately.

In view of the inconvenience faced by people near the India-Myanmar border, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has decided to allow cross-border movements of those living 10 kilometres of the frontier, officials said on Saturday. The MHA had scrapped the Free Movement Regime (FMR) between the two countries amid the continuing trouble in Manipur due to ethnic clashes.

The entry will be regulated from 43 designated border crossing points where Assam Rifles personnel will issue "border passes".

Eight pilot entry and exit points would be made functional immediately, while 35 other points would be set up under Phase I and II.

The MHA said the movement of people from the 43 designated crossing points "will be granted to the pass-holders issued by an authorised representative of Assam Rifles and the same will entail 'single entry of person' for a stay of up to seven days at a stretch within 10 the km of the Indo-Myanmar border". Upon return, the passes will have to be deposited at the same crossing point where it was issued.

Additionally, the policy stipulates that the pass-holders "will be permitted to enter the border area for the purposes of visiting relatives, tourism, business, sports, official duty, medical treatment, border trade affairs, attending seminars, meetings, or conferences, and cultural exchange programmes".

The order also directed the chief secretary to "appoint at least two police and two health officials at each of the identified entry and exit points of the Assam Rifles company operating at bases where the people would be allowed to enter".

NIA seizes cellphones in raid against Maoists

MUKESH RANJAN @New Delhi

> **The raids were prompted by the arrest of Krishna Hansda, a regional committee member of the proscribed terrorist organisation CPI (Maoist). He was arrested in the Lucio forest area of Dumri in January 2023**
>
> NIA official

Multiple searches

The premises of suspected Naxal operatives were searched by multiple NIA teams. They seized several mobile phones and SIM cards, ₹1.5 lakh cash and other incriminating materials.

IN a move to combat left-wing extremism in the Naxal hotbeds of Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) has conducted searches at multiple locations in both states, officials said on Saturday.

The houses and premises of suspects and Naxal operatives were extensively searched by multiple teams of the NIA, which seized several mobile phones and SIM cards, ₹1.5 lakh cash, and other incriminating material, they added.

A senior NIA officer said, "The raids were prompted by the arrest of Krishna Hansda, a Naxal cadre of the proscribed terrorist organisation CPI (Maoist). Hansda, a regional committee member of CPI (Maoist), was arrested in the Lucio forest area of Dumri in January 2023".

During the probe, the NIA, which took over the case in June 2023, unearthed the links of several suspects and Naxals believed to be involved in supplying logistics and electronic items to CPI (Maoist) in the Parasnath area of Giridih.

In Chhattisgarh, the probe agency conducted raids in remote villages in a CPI (Maoist) attack on a polling and security team during the Assembly elections in 2023.

"Searches were carried out at the locations of at least 11 suspects in the villages of Rawandiggi, Semra, Mainpur, Ghoragaon, Kerabahra and Gariyaband in the sensitive Maoist-infested areas of Gariyaband and Dhamtari districts," the officer said.

He said, "The Mainpur-Nuapada division was behind the IED blast that killed a head constable of ITBP adhoc 615 battalion in the attack on the polling team during the state elections in November last year."

Over 18L gave up citizenships in 13 yrs, says govt

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @New Delhi

MORE than 18 lakh Indians have renounced their citizenship in the last 13 years, opting for nationality of 135 countries, according to government data presented in the Rajya Sabha.

The countries opted for citizenship include Pakistan, Bangladesh, Fiji, Myanmar, Thailand, Namibia, Nepal and Sri Lanka, which significantly lag behind India in terms of development and global influence. Other countries that emerged as popular choices included the US, Canada, Russia, China, Egypt, New Zealand, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Switzerland, Trinidad and Tobago, the UK, Turkey, the UAE and Vietnam.

According to the data presented by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), a record 2,25,620 Indians gave up their citizenship in 2022, followed closely by 2,16,219 in 2023. From 2015 to 2023, more than 12 lakh people decided to give up their Indian nationality and acquire citizenships of other nations.

In its reply to the Upper House, the MEA has attributed this trend to personal reasons. "The reason for renouncing or taking citizenship are personal. The government recognises the potential of the global workplace in an era of knowledge economy. It has also brought about a transformational change in its engagement with Indian diaspora," MEA said.

Some experts have linked the trend to factors such as better career opportunities, improved quality of life, enhanced educational prospects, and access to global mobility. "The lure of developed countries with robust social security systems and provision of dual citizenship, which India currently does not permit, may have also played a role," said Archana Kumari, a foreign employment analyst.

Prior to 2022, as many as 1,63,370 Indians had opted for the citizenship of other countries. Only in the 2020, which witnessed worldwide Covid pandemic, the lowest number of 85,256 Indians opted for the citizenship of other countries.

The number of Indians exploring the global workplace has been significant in the last two decades. The MEA reported that around 13 million Indian nationals, including labourers, professionals, and experts, are currently living abroad, according to information shared with the parliament.

Currently, dual citizenship is not permitted as per the provisions of Article 9 of the Constitution of India, and Section 9 of the Citizenship Act, 1955.

The Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) scheme was introduced by amending the Citizenship Act, 1955 in August 2005. The scheme provides for registration as OCI, of all the Persons of Indian Origin who were citizens of India on January 26, 1950 or thereafter. The registered OCIs will not be entitled to the rights conferred on a citizen of India under Article 16 of the Constitution.

Military diplomacy: Indian Navy's 3rd warship visits Casablanca within a year

MAYANK SINGH @New Delhi

Indian Navy personnel aboard INS Tushil arrives in Casablanca, Morocco | PTI

AS part of efforts to bolster bilateral relations and naval cooperation with Morocco, Indian naval ship (INS) Tushil docked at Casablanca and both the navies will engage in an exercise.

"Morocco is a maritime nation and, like India, holds a unique geographical position with coastlines along the Mediterranean and the Atlantic Ocean. As part of strengthening of bilateral relations and naval cooperation between India and Morocco, INS Tushil arrived at Casablanca, Morocco on December 27," the Navy said on Saturday. The visit by the Indian warship aims at exploring avenues for collaboration between both the navies.

"During the two-day visit, the Tushil crew would engage with the Royal Moroccan Navy personnel at the functional level, host distinguished senior officials and other guests towards furthering naval cooperation, diplomatic ties and fostering goodwill. Thereafter, both the navies will engage in a Passage Exercise at sea to improve interoperability and share the best practices," the Navy said.

"In the past 12 months, three Indian naval ships — Tabar, Tarkash and Sumedha — visited Casablanca, significantly elevating mutual trust and interoperability," the Navy said.

India-Morocco relations go back to the 14th century when famous traveller and writer Ibn Batuta came to India. Joint Working Groups meet regularly to strengthen bilateral relationship.

Meanwhile, Indian Army's Gorkha Rifles tropps left for Nepalon Saturday to participate in a joint military exercise. "The exercise, Surya Kiran, will be conducted in Saljhandi, Nepal from December 31 to January 13. The Nepal Army contingent will be represented by the Srijung Battalion," the Army said.

BANDHI IN MANIPUR

Normal life was affected in the five districts of Imphal Valley on Saturday due to a bandh called over the arrest of six armed men and the death of one in a gunfight with the police in Thoubal on December 14.

3 HELD IN BARABANKI WITH ILLEGAL SMACK WORTH ₹75 LAKH

INDIA	Max	Min		Max	Min
Ahmedabad	27	18	Mumbai	28	28
Bhopal	25	14	Panaji	32	24
Jaipur	22	15	Patna	35	27
Amritsar	20	07	Lucknow	36	22
Chennai	28	25	Port Blair	28	24
Kolkata	26	17	Imphal	31	19
Srinagar	07	-02	Chandigarh	35	19

● Amid heavy snowfall, traffic movement on Manali-Leh highway restricted ● Dry snowfall in Dec-Jan vital for Himalayan glaciers

Kulu district administration has issued warnings to tourists and locals, urging them to avoid unnecessary travel | EXPRESS

Houses in Kedarnath shrine area after fresh snowfall in Rudraprayag district of Uttarakhand on Saturday | PTI

BRO lacks facility

Sources said the road is maintained by BRO but it has no facility for evacuation. Vehicles were trapped, halting traffic movement

Wheel drive vehicles, snow-cutting equipment and slat are needed to clear the roads in case of heavy snowfall. The officials are monitoring the situation closely

An offical

8K stranded tourists, 1.5K vehicles rescued

HARPREET BAJWA @ Chandigarh

AROUND 8,000 tourists and 1,500 vehicles, stranded at Solang Nala in Himachal Pradesh's Kullu district amid heavy snowfall, have been rescued, police said on Saturday. A snowstorm struck Manali-Leh highway on Friday, halting traffic movement. Vehicles were trapped and tourists stuck.

"The local administration began rescue operations, deploying Kullu police teams. Over 8,000 tourists were evacuated safely to Manali along with their 1,500 vehicles and moved to Manali from the snow-bound Solang Nala," a senior police official said. "Traffic movement towards Solang valley and Lahaul valley on Manali-Leh highway will be restricted near Nehru Kund in view of public safety," the official added.

Sources said that the road is maintained by BRO but it has no facility for evacuation in case of any emergency. "Wheel drive vehicles, snow-cutting equipment and slat are needed to clear the roads in case of heavy snowfall," an official said.

Kulu district administration has issued warnings to tourists and locals, urging them to avoid unnecessary travel in the area due to the ongoing snowfall. Authorities have been working to clear the highway and restore normalcy, but have cautioned that similar disruptions may occur if the snowfall persists. "The administration is monitoring the situation closely and is coordinating with weather agencies to ensure prompt action in case of further weather-related disruptions," the official said.

Heavy rain and snowfall were recorded on Friday in six districts -- Lahaul-Spiti, Chamba, Kangra, Kullu, Shimla, and Kinnaur. The IMD had issued an orange alert for snowfall and cold waves in the state for December 27 and 28. "From December 29 onwards, a renewed cold wave is expected to impact the plains, including Bilaspur, Hamirpur, and Una districts. These areas, along with Mandi, Kullu, and Chamba, are likely to remain under severe cold conditions until January 1," said the IMD.

Dry snow density goes up

Dry snow is more compact in terms of density, compared to wet snow. Its density increases, leading to greater longevity

In Uttarakhand, snowfall typically occurs in December-January or February-March. Last season, we experienced good snowfall in Feb-March

Manish Mehta, glaciologist

Heavy snow, rain good for health of glaciers

NARENDRA SETHI @ Dehradun

ALTHOUGH the Meteorological Centre has described the recent snowfall and rain in Uttarakhand as a "relief," glaciologists caution that these weather patterns should be seen as a critical indicator for vigilance. A spokesperson for the Meteorological Centre stated, "The current weather conditions are beneficial for the region, providing much-needed moisture." In contrast, glaciologists emphasize the importance of closely monitoring these changes.

"While snowfall can be advantageous, it is essential to remain alert to its implications for glacier health," warned a prominent glaciologist.

Speaking to this newspaper, Manish Mehta, a glaciologist at the Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology, emphasized the importance of dry snow during December and January for the health of the Himalayan glaciers. He said, "Dry snow is more compact in terms of density, compared to wet snow, which falls in February and March. Its density increases, leading to greater longevity. This makes it a positive indicator for the 'better health' of glaciers."

"In Uttarakhand, snowfall typically occurs in December-January or February-March. Last season, we experienced good snowfall in February-March 2024," the glaciologist said.

Uttarakhand is experiencing a significant shift in weather patterns, with heavy rainfall and snowfall reported in the high peaks starting Friday. If the region receives sufficient snowfall this season, it could have a positive impact on the health of its glaciers, say experts.

The MeT department has forecast similar weather conditions across the state, raising hopes for improved glacier conditions. "A day or two of snowfall will not make a significant difference. There has to be a continuous spell for at least 10-15 days," Mehta said.

Meteorological Centre, Director, Bikram Singh said, "From Saturday, light to moderate snowfall is likely in areas at altitudes between 2200 and 2500 meters."

ED raids premises of 6-time Cong MLA in C'garh liquor scam

EJAZ KAISER @ Raipur

THE Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Saturday conducted raids at the residences of six-time Congress MLA **Kawasi Lakhma**, his son Harish and Congress leader Raju Sahu in Chhattisgarh as part of a money laundering investigation linked to an alleged liquor scam in the state, official sources said.

They raided premises including Lakhma's residence in Raipur and his son Harish Lakhma's premises in Sukma district under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

Security forces were deployed outside their residences during the ongoing searches. The ED is yet to reveal if incriminating evidence or vital clues linked to the scam were traced.

The former excise minister in the Bhupesh Baghel cabinet, Lakhma, whose name was among the 70 others in the FIR lodged in the alleged liquor scam, was pitted against the BJP's first timer Mahesh Kashyap in LS polls from Bastar constituency and Congress leader lost.

Ex-forest minister's son grilled by ED in Corbett tree felling

NARENDRA SETHI @ Dehradun

THE Enforcement Directorate (ED) has intensified its investigation into the family of Uttarakhand's former Forest Minister **Harak Singh Rawat** for land fraud and illegal tree felling in the Corbett Tiger Reserve.

After questioning his wife, Deepti Rawat, and close associate Lakshmi Rana, Harak's son, Tushit Rawat, was summoned for similar inquiries.

According to sources, Tushit was questioned on Friday for nearly eight hours. The ED focused its inquiries on the registration of two power of attorney documents related to the construction of the Doon Institute of Medical Sciences under the Shri Purna Devi Memorial Trust and matters concerning the Corbett Tiger Safari scam.

Birendra Singh Kandari and Narendra Kumar Walia allegedly registered two power of attorney documents in a criminal conspiracy case. However, the court had annulled the sale deeds related to the land in question.

Beed murder mastermind's assets to be seized: Fadnavis

SUDHIR SURYAWANSHI @ Mumbai

MAHARASHTRA Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Saturday ordered the police to confiscate the properties of the prime accused in the Beed sarpanch murder case. Walmik Karad, who allegedly masterminded the murder of Massajog sarpanch Santosh Deshmukh, has been absconding for the last 19 days.

Fadnavis issued the order to the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) that has been probing the Santosh Deshmukh murder case. The CID visited residence of Karad and enquired his family members about his whereabouts.

Sources from the home department confirmed that Fadnavis also ordered a probe into viral pictures showing people with firearms. If the images are verified to be authentic, the government will begin the process of cancelling the gun licences of those involved, the sources said, referring to a home department order.

Leaders of all parties have demanded the resignation of NCP minister Dhanjay Munde as murder accused Karad is his aide. NCP MLA Prakash Salunkhe said that until the investigation into the murder case is completed, Munde should not remain as a minister for a fair probe. NCP (SP) MLA Sandeep Kshirsagar demanded the arrest of Karad and resignation of "his political boss Dhananjay Munde". He said the sarpanch murder case should not been seen through the caste prism.

NCP minister Munde said that he is not protecting anyone who is involved in Massajog sarpanch killing. "I want justice for the deceased Deshmukh. The case should be tried in a fast track court. There should be harshest punishment for those who are responsible for the murder of the sarpanch even if they are close to me. My only request is that opponents should not tarnish my image," Munde said.

Massajog sarpanch Deshmukh was murdered on December 9 after intervening in an extortion attempt at a wind power plant. Police have arrested three people, but four others, including Karad, remain at large.

Protests, poster wars come out in open as factionalism rocks BJP in Gujarat

DILIP SINGH KSHATRIYA @ Ahmedabad

FACTIONALISM within the Gujarat BJP has intensified following the recent appointments of mandal and taluka presidents, leading to widespread dissent. Protests have erupted across various districts along with a poster war between the warring factions.

The unrest has drawn in supporters of former Deputy Chief Minister and MLA Karsan Solanki. Tensions escalated in Mehsana district, where protests in Vadnagar transformed into a poster war in Kadi taluka, pitting supporters of former Deputy Chief Minister Nitin Patel against MLA Solanki.

In Kadi, the controversy arose after Shailesh Thakor was appointed as the party's Kadi taluka president, and Jignesh Patel as the city president. Posters congratulating Jignesh Patel featured images of former Deputy CM Nitin Patel and senior BJP leaders, conspicuously omitting Thakor and Solanki. In response, Thakor's supporters created posters that included Solanki, but excluded Patel.

Warring factions in Mehsana district

The unrest has drawn in supporters of former Deputy Chief Minister and MLA Karsan Patel. Tensions escalated in Mehsana district, where protests in Vadnagar transformed into a poster war in Kadi taluka, pitting supporters of former Deputy Chief Minister Nitin Patel against MLA Karsan Solanki.

"A cold war is brewing between former DyCM Patel and MLA Solanki's factions over control of the Kadi city and taluka organizations, cooperative bodies, and local governance," sources said.

The rivalry, which began during the Kadi APMC elections, has now intensified within the organizational framework.

Both leaders have been fiercely lobbying at the district and state BJP to secure key positions for their loyalists in the city and taluka setups. Consequently, the state BJP appointed an ally of Patel as the city chief and Solanki as taluka party president. "During the formation of the Kadi city and taluka BJP organizations, factionalism and casteism became prominent," a leader said.

With the Patidar and Thakor communities dominating Kadi, the election of a Patidar leader as city BJP president led to demands from the Thakor faction for a Bakshi Panch community leader to head the Taluka BJP, the leader explained.

Around 1,000 workers threatened to resign if the MLA's candidate was not chosen as taluka chief.

Multi-disaster response vehicle at Mahakumbh

NAMITA BAJPAI @ Lucknow

AS part of Mahakumbh preparations, a state-of-the-art multi-disaster response vehicle has been deployed to enhance safety and disaster readiness at the mela arena.

Equipped with advanced tools, the facility aims at ensuring a streamlined and seamless emergency management during the event. The multi-disaster response vehicle features a victim location camera and various state-of-the-art tools for efficient disaster response, ensuring the safety of devotees attending the Mahakumbh.

According to Mahakumbh's Nodal and Chief Fire Officer Pramod Sharma, the vehicle features state-of-the-art equipment capable of handling situations ranging from natural disasters to road accidents.

It includes a lifting bag with a capacity of 10 to 20 tonnes, enabling the rescue of individuals buried under debris, and specialised machines to lift and move heavy objects weighing up to 1.5 tonnes.

Additionally, the vehicle is equipped with tools to cut and spread through strong debris during emergencies. The victim location camera is particularly effective in locating individuals trapped in collapsed structures. An inbuilt generator ensures the seamless operation of electronic equipment, even in challenging conditions.

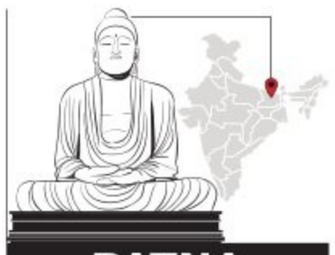
To ensure the safety of rescuers, the vehicle is stocked with protective gear such as life jackets, life rings, and life buoys.

A temperature-measuring device further enhances its utility by providing accurate temperature readings during fire incidents. Sharma said that the deployment of the multi-disaster response vehicle would significantly assist the administration in managing potential emergencies during the Mahakumbh.

The vehicle will serve not only during the Mela but also in other disaster management operations in the state.

The Mahakumbh mela administration has put in place a three-level intelligence system in a move to bolster security for the pilgrims. Besides checkpoints set up for the verification of visitors before entering the mela arena, underwater drones have been be deployed at Sangam to monitor underwater activities round the clock, officials said.

FOR SAFETY AT MEGA EVENT
Multi-disaster response vehicle to enhance safety and disaster readiness
To help in seamless emergency management
EXPECTED FOOTFALL OF OVER 40 CR
FEATURES
Victim location camera: Can handle situations ranging from natural disasters to road accidents
Includes a lifting bag with a capacity of 10 to 20 tonnes
Equipped with tools to cut and spread through strong debris during emergencies
Inbuilt generator for seamless operation of electronic equipmen



PATNA DIARY

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ramashankar@newindianexpress.com

Nitish says no to INDIA bloc invite for return

RJD MLA Bhai Birendra invited Bihar CM Nitish to return to INDIA bloc ahead of Bihar assembly elections due next year. The one-day visit of Nitish to New Delhi on Sunday has heated up the state politics. Nitish is likely to meet family members of former PM Manmohan Singh following the latter's demise. He may also go for his routine health check up. The CM, however, turned down RJD's offer and reiterated that he would remain in NDA. Nitish said that he would not commit the mistake that he had done twice on earlier occasions. He resolved that the ruling NDA will focus more on development of the state.

JD(U) flags off 'Karpoori Rath' to broaden support

With Bihar assembly elections less than a year away, all political parties have started preparations. CM Nitish Kumar's JD(U) flagged off 'Karpoori Rath' from the state party office. The objective is to broaden the party's support base among Extremely Backward Castes, which constitutes nearly 36.01% of the state's population. Opposition RJD and newly formed Jan Suraaj Party are also trying to woo them. Nitish is credited with initiatives for their empowerment, first offering the EBCs a stake in local governance, 20% quota in seats in three-tier panchayat samitis and gram panchayats in January 2006.

PK urged to contest from Tejashwi constituency

The demand of a section of voters of Raghopur, the assembly constituency of RJD leader Tejashwi Prasad Yadav, has put Jan Suraaj Party founder Prashant Kishor in a tight spot. They have requested Kishor to contest from Raghopur assembly seat in the assembly elections next year. The demand came during a meeting of the party held under Bidupur block in Vaishali district. Kishor has already declared to field party candidates in all the 243 assembly seats and provide 40 seats to Muslims alone.

CALLS FOR SWIFT PROBE INTO JET CRASH

BRUSSELS/MOSCOW

THE European Union's top diplomat on Saturday called for a "swift, independent" probe into the Azerbaijan Airlines crash, after the US suggested the incident may have been caused by a Russian anti-aircraft missile.

The jet came down near the Kazakh city of Aktau on Wednesday, killing 38 of the 67 people on board, after attempting to land at its destination in the Russian city of Grozny and then diverting far off course across the Caspian Sea.

"I call for a swift, independent international investigation," Kaja Kallas, the EU's foreign affairs chief, wrote on social media platform X.

She said the incident was a "stark reminder" of the downing of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17, which was shot down by a surface-to-air missile fired by Russia-backed rebels over eastern Ukraine in 2014.

"Our thoughts are with the families and friends of the victims. I wish for a speedy recovery to the injured," Kallas said.

Men carry a coffin with remains of one of the victims of the Azerbaijan Airlines crash in Kazakhistan on Wednesday | AP

Her remarks came as Russian leader Vladimir Putin told his Azerbaijani counterpart Ilham Aliyev that Russian air defence was active when the Azerbaijani Airlines plane tried to land in Grozny.

According to the Kremlin, Putin called Aliyev and apologised that the incident took place in Russian airspace – but did not claim responsibility for the crash.

"During this time, Grozny, (the town of) Mozdok and Vladikavkaz were being attacked by Ukrainian combat drones and Russian air defence was repelling these attacks," Putin said, according to a Krelin transcript.

It added that: "Vladimir Putin had presented his apologies that the tragic incident happened in Russia's air space and again expressed his deep and genuine condolences to the families of the dead, wishing a quick recovery to those affected."

But Aliyev appeared in no doubt that the plane was shot at over Russia.

"President Ilham Aliyev emphasised that the Azerbaijan Airlines passenger plane encountered external physical and technical interference while in Russian airspace, resulting in a complete loss of control," Baku's presidency said in a statement.

It added Aliyev "highlighted that the multiple holes in the aircraft's fuselage, injuries sustained by passengers and crew due to foreign particles penetrating the cabin mid-flight, and testimonies from surviving flight attendants and passengers confirm evidence of external physical and technical interference." *Agencies*

Pak soldier killed, 7 wounded in clashes with Afghan forces

PESHAWAR

A Pakistani paramilitary soldier was killed and seven others wounded in cross-border exchanges of fire with Afghanistan's forces, a security source said on Saturday, while hundreds of Afghans protested against the deadly air strikes that sparked the clashes.

Sporadic fighting, including with heavy weaponry, erupted overnight between border forces on the frontier between Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in Pakistan and Khost province in Afghanistan, officials from both countries said.

The exchanges of fire come after Afghanistan's Taliban authorities accused Pakistan of killing 46 people, mainly women and children, in air strikes near the border in the southeastern province of Paktika this week. A Pakistan senior security source said they targeted "terrorist hideouts", though Islamabad has not officially confirmed carrying out the bombardment. "One frontier corps (FC) soldier has been reported dead, and seven others have been injured," a senior security source at the border told AFP, adding clashes took place in at least two locations in Pakistan's border district of Kurram.

Protesters take part in a demonstration, condemning Pakistan's airstrikes in the Barmal district of eastern Afghanistan province of Paktika on Saturday | AFP

The Afghan defence ministry said on X that "several points" across the border with Pakistan "where the attacks in Afghanistan were organised... were targeted in retaliation".

A provincial official in Khost told AFP the clashes forced residents to flee border areas, but that there were no reports of casualties among Afghan forces.

In Khost city, the provincial capital, hundreds of Afghans demonstrated against Pakistan on Saturday, calling for accountability for civilian deaths.

Protester Najibullah Zaland said they demanded global economic pressure on Pakistan to prevent such incidents.

"We gathered here today to raise our voices to the world," he told AFP.

"A path to peace must be put in place, or else the youth will not stay silent." The demonstrators praised the Afghan forces, with one protester, Rashidullah Hamdard, saying "our fighters gave them a strong response, and we stand with our forces".

"We demand the world hold the Pakistani military accountable for these cruel and foolish attacks," Hamdard said. *AFP*

PUBLIC NOTICE

My client has intended to purchase the vacant property bearing BDA Site No. 52, present BBMP E-PID No. 4156098411, formed by The Vyalikaval House Building Co Operative Society Limited in several survey numbers of Nagawara Village, Kasba Hobli, Bangalore North Taluk, measuring East to West (15.54+15.24) /2 Mtrs and North to South 9.14 Mtrs, totally measuring 140.66 Sq. Mtrs from its present owner M/s. Jade Forte Infra Private Limited, represented by its Director, Mr. Kambam Sai Teja Reddy. The said owner has represented that he is the absolute owner of the said property and apart from him, no other person/s, having any right, title or interest. He further represented that the said property is not mortgaged or charged to anybody else by them to any third person/s or Banks and the same is not subject matter of litigation in any Court of Law. Any person/s, having any claim, interest or right over the above said property may contact or write to the undersigned with documentary proof to substantiate such claim/s or interest within Seven (7) days from the date of this publication. In the absence of any such claim or objection within the stipulated time, it will be construed that there is no one having any claims or objection on the said property and my client will proceed with the sale transaction.

Bangalore **H. NAGESH ADVOCATE,**
Date: 29.12.2024 No. 46, Z Plaza 2ndMain,Sheshadripuram, Bangalore – 20. Mob: 990201565.

PUBLIC NOTICE

We, **M/s. TBC HOMES INFRA CORP**, a registered Partnership Firm, having its office at **Site No. 23, Sy. No. 86/4, Byagadadenahalli, Chandapura, Anekal Road, R.K. Form Arch, Bangalore-562106**, its Partners Sri. P. Ravi, **Sri. Dayanand Sagar B.P, Sri. R. Srinivas Reddy, and Sri. Manu N**, represented by its authorized signatory K.B. Santhosh Kumar. The Present owners of Property bearing Sy No.121 **Smt. Padmamma .T** and **Sri.M. Krupakara Reddy** Family and Property bearing No.120 in the name of **Smt.Vijayalakshmi** Family, do hereby solemnly affirm and declare as follows:

Where Land Owners Smt.Padmamma.T and **Sri. M. Krupakara Reddy,** family and **Smt. Vijayalakshmi** Family has entered to JDA in favour of M/s. TBC Infra Corp and Crucial Original documents have been reported lost.

The Documents are as under:

I) Gift Deed No.1435-1958-59, II) Gift Deed No. 1436-1958-59, III) Sale Deed No. 3077-1958-59 in respect of Sy No.121 measuring 2 Acres and 1 Gunta, Situated at Mutthanalluru Village, Kasaba Hobli, Anekal Taluk, Bengaluru District and iv) **Lease Deed No. 529-1939-1940** in respect of Sy No.120 measuring 2 Acres and 1 Gunta, Situated at Mutthanalluru Village, Kasaba Hobli, Anekal Taluk, Bengaluru District, All documents are registered in office of the Sub Registrar Anekal. The document holds immense significance as proof of ownership. The documents were lost on 18.12.2024, between 12:00 PM and 1.00 PM, while traveling from Anekal to Chandapura. Anyone with information about its whereabouts is urged to Contact: TBC Homes Infra Corp Office (Contact Number 9880256939) or Anekal Police Station. Your assistance in locating this document would be greatly appreciated & suitably rewarded. Reference e-Lost Report No. 1388440/2024, Date: 18.12.2024.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is given on behalf of our clients **Mr. H.K. AMARESH** S/o Mr. H.P. Krishna Reddy, that the original **Sale Deed dated 07/02/2006 and registered on 08/02/2006** was executed by M/s. Reliaable Lavendula, A Partnership Firm, for the Purchase of the property in the Sale Deed dated **07/02/2006 and registered on 08/02/2006, document No. ANK-1-15605/2005-06** of Book I stored in CD No. ANKD97 in the Office of the Sub-Registrar, Anekal, with respect to residential vacant site **bearing No. 141, Katha No. 4242** in the layout known as **"RELIAABLE LAVENDULA", measuring East to West by 65 feet;** North to South by 40 feet, in all measuring 2600 Sq.Ft., situated at Kammasandra Village, Attibele Hobli, Anekal Taluk, Bangalore Rural District, has been lost/misplaced by our client **Mr. H.K. AMARESH**, for which the undersigned has registered on behalf of our client an appropriate Lost Article complaint vide **e-Lost Report No. 1402763/ 2024 on : 27/12/2024** with Karnataka State Police (Bangalore City unit).

If anyone finds these documents, please return it to the undersigned party. All the persons are hereby informed not to deal or carry out any transaction with anyone on the basis of the above-mentioned missing documents without approval of our client. If anyone has already carried out any transaction or any transaction is in the process of being carried out using these missing documents, kindly inform the undersigned party in writing at the below mentioned address within 14 days from the day of this paper publication after which no claim shall be entertained by our clients.

Sd/- Anupam Agarwal
RAMNIWAS SURAJMAL
(Advocates & Solicitors)
No. 511, 'A' Wing, Mittal Tower, M.G. Road, Bangalore-560 001. Phone No.: 9740645762
Email: anupam@rslegal.in
Place: Bangalore, Date: 29/12/2024

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to public that my client **Sri. Naveen G** states that original Sale deed dated 18-05-2006 executed by Lawrence and his wife Smt. Clara and their children Kumari Shilpa, Master Naveen Kumar and Kumari Prasilla being minors represented by their father Lawrence in favour of Mr. Shekhappa B Agadi vide document No. BAS-1-04152/2006-07 stored in CD No. BASD242 in the office of the sub-registrar Bengaluru South Taluk was lost during transit.

If any body get any information about the said document/in the possession of the same/having any claim/interest in the schedule property may write/contact to the undersigned within 15 days with documentary proof failing which my clients will treat the certified copy of the said document as original and objections received thereafter is not binding upon my client.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of the Property bearing Eastern portion of Site No. 2, Khatha No. 25/2, situated at Hommadevanahalli Village, Begur Hobli, Bengaluru South Taluk. Measuring : East to West : 15 ft North to South : 40 ft Admeasuring 600 sqft Bounded on:
East by : Site No. 1 belongs to Thomas
West by : Western portion of same Site No. 2
North by : Road
South by : Property belongs to Lawrence

POORNIMA. K.S Advocate.
2710, 6th Main, 2nd Stage, K.S. Layout, Bangalore-560 078. Mb: 9886244736.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This notice is issued on behalf of my client **P. RAMAKRISHNA S/o. Pullappa, Kasavanahalli, Varthur Hobli, Bangalore East,** to bring to the notice of the general public that the original Sale Deed Registration documents dated 31/05/2023 registered as doc no. BNG(U) BTM No. 1717/2023-24, stored in CD No. BTMD1251 in the Office of Sub-Registrar BTM Layout, Bengaluru and connected documents is/are missing /lost/ misplaced. If any person/s, firm, company, institution or organization has any claim/s are holding the afore mentioned document, they may contact the undersigned in writing within **7 days** from the date of this notice failing which it will be presumed that there are no claims.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of Residential Vacant **Site bearing No. 114, Khata No.52,** situated at **Doddanagamangala Village, Begur Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk,** within the jurisdiction of Konnappana Agrahara Group Panchayath, measuring East to West : 30 Feet and North to South: 43 Feet in all measuring **1290 Sq Feet** and bounded on the:

East by : Site bearing No.115; West by : Site bearing No.113; North by : Road; South by : Doddanagamangala Tank in Sy.No.54.

K.S. KALLESHAPPA, Advocate
No.138, 1st Floor, 2nd Main, Sheshadripuram, Bangalore-560020.
M : 9448171071

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the General Public that my client, Sri.Ramachandra Murthy H is intending to purchase the below mentioned schedule property from Smt. Kasamsetty Anuradha also known as K. Anuradha W/o K. Ramaprasad, R/at Kalluru Village, Garladinne, Ananthpura District, Andra Pradesh. Apart from the said owner, any interested person/s having any manner of right, title, interest, claim or objections may lodge the same in writing to the below mentioned address with relevant documents in support of their claims and objections within 14 days from the date of this public notice, failing which my client will proceed to purchase the Schedule Property treating that there are no claims over the Schedule Property and thereafter no claims/objections/disputes will be entertained.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that Piece & Parcel of the vacant Residential Site No. 271, Khata No. 42/271, Property No.7288259356 Arasinakunte Village, Vijaya Vittal Nagara, Kasaba Hobli, Nelamangala Taluk, measuring East to West 19.8+19.2/2 Mtr. & North to South 14.3+11/2, admeasuring 246.675 Sq. Mtr. Bounded on: East by :Agriculture Land, West: Road, North by: Converted Land, South by: Site No. 270.

Ms.LATHASHREE D L, Advocate
No.F113, 1D 1ST Floor, Central Chambers,Gandhinagar, Bengaluru-560009
Ph: 9686389599
Also Contact:
Ramachandra Murthy H: 9845930056
Place: Bengaluru | Date: 29.12.2024

PUBLIC NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF V ADDIL. CITY CIVIL & SESSIONS JUDGE, AT BENGALURU
P&SC No. 403/2024 (CCH-13)

Plaintiffs/Petitioners
Smt. Geeta Kumari Sinha,
W/o Late Bisheshwar Sinha, Aged about 68 years, Residing at 84/8 Dinkar Chouk, Rajendra Nagar, Patna-800016
Also residing at : 401, Pooja Apartments, Grant Road, Ashok Nagar, Vittal Mallya Road, Bengaluru-56000),
Represented by her son, the GPA Holder
Mr. Nitish Ranjan Sinhal -V/S-
Defendants/Respondents : NIL

NOTICE/SUMMONS TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC

WHEREAS, the above-named Petitioner Instituted a suit for grant of succession Certificate u/s 371 r/w 372 of the Indian Succession Act, 1925 with respect to movable properties standing in the name of her deceased son Nihar Ranjan as mentioned in the Schedule hereunder. in favour of petitioner. The late Nihar Ranjan was died on 22/6/2024.

Any person having objections to the same is directed to appear before this court **on 18/01/2025 A.M** at 11.a.m, in person or through advocate/pleader to answer the questions to the same. Failing which the suit will be heard and determined as ex-parte.

Given under my hand and seal of the court, this **18th day of December 2024.**

SCHEDULE

Sl. No.	Particulars	Amount
1	Axis Bank. Mumbai Branch	Rs.1,99,85,363.70/-
2	HDFC Bank, Tulsiani Mumbai Branch	Rs.1,47,974.44/-
3	COUR, Rotak Mahindra Bank. Mumbai Nariman Point	Rs.5,92,412.29/-
4	LV Destek Angels Mera Pashu II Scheme towards 10.3500 units of share	Rs.10,35,000/-
5	Balance in Current Account - Exfinity Venture Partners LLP as on 31.03.2024	Rs. 14,94,000/-
6	Balance in Capital Account Exfinity Venture Partners LLP as on 31.03.2024	Rs. 5,00,000/-

By Order Of The Court, Asst. Registrar City Civil Court, Bangalore
Harshavardhan B. Sharma
Anoma Law Group LLP
Tower A-1, Golden Enclave, Old Airport Road, Murugeshpalya, Bengaluru -17

PUBLIC NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF THE SUBORDINATE JUDGE OF UDUMALPET
I.A.No.127/2024
HMOP No. / 2024
HMOP CFR No.7977/2024

P. Prasathkumar ..Petitioner
-vs-
D. Pavankodi
W/o. Prasathkumar
C/o. S.K.D. Rajkumar
14/1, 1st A Cross 5th Main srusilhotel, A.D. Halli, Bangalore North, Basaveshwaranga,Bangalore, Karnataka - 560 079 **Respondent**

NOTICE TO RESPONDENT

WHEREAS the abovenamed **Petitioner** has filed the above HMOP against you as **respondent** for seeking the relief of **DIVORCE** and also filed an application under Section 14(1) of Hindu Marriage Act for seeking the relief of exceptional hardship and the same is numbered as I.A.No. 127/2024 you are hereby appear before this Honourable court in person or by an advocate duly instructed on **22-01-2025** at about **10-30 A.M.,** to show cause against the above petition, if you fail to appear, the said **PETITION** will be heard and determined exparte.

/ By Court Order /
K.Subramanian, B.A., B.L., Advocate, 7, Appavu Street, Udumalpet-642 126. Tiruppur District

SOUTH CENTRAL RAILWAY
Follow us on @SCRailwayindia
Details of the Tender Notices of S.C Railway can be seen on our website : www.scr.indianrailways.gov.in

TENDER NOTICE NO: 103/2024 Dt.27.12.2024.
SUPPLY OF STORES ITEMS
e-Procurement Tender Notice

The Following Tenders Have Been Floated Online. Tenders Are Requested To Visit The Website **www.ireps.gov.in** And Submit Their Offers Online. The Tender Description, Qty, EMD, SD May Be Seen In Website. Offers Submitted Manually Will Not Be Accepted. Offers By Post Will Not Be Entertained. Tender Closing Time Is 14.30 Hrs Of The Due Date Of The Tender. "For All Indigenous Offers, EMD Will Be Accepted Only Via Online System As Available On **www.ireps.gov.in**."

Tender No.	Brief Description
LN246758	Axle Box cleaning Plant
LN246978	Set of 2items of brake system
LN247016	Set of 2 items of brake system
LN247018	Set of 7 items of WSP system
LN247020	Articulated spherplastic
66247029	Procurement of Pumps
66248356	Procurement of Pneumatic cylinder
66248454	Procurement of Shaft, HOOK, Slider
66248273	Procurement of CLAMP ROLLER
6024PT034	Rate Contract for plate screws
38245060	Distributor valve with adapter
33241010	Set of 25 items
56245126A	Supply of SMPS

Note:-Due dates of Tender Opening: SL.No.01 on dt.03.01.2025.SL.No. 02 on dt.7.01.2025. SL.No. 03 to 05 on dt.08.01.2025 SL.No.06 on 09.01.2025.SL No.07&8 on dt 16.01.2025. SL.No.09 on 17.01.2025.SL.No.10&11 on dt.20.01.2025 SL.No.12 on dt 23.01.2025. SL.No.13 on dt 29.01.2025

Beside Above Mentioned Tenders There Are Other Tenders Having **Value Above Rs.50 Lakhs.**

For Details, Please Visit Railway Website Above.

Principal Chief Materials Manager/Secunderabad
A1651

For further tender conditions / details and for downloading the tender documents, Please visit website at https://www.ireps.gov.in or www.scr.indianrailways.gov.in

Deptt. of Water Resources, Government of Odisha
A-797
"e" Procurement Notice No. ACEDC-CTC- 02/ 2024-25

1. Name of the Works: **Total 07 (Seven) nos.** different Drainage works
2. Estimated cost: **Rs. 101.34 lakh to 496.68 lakh**
3. Period of Completion: **11(Eleven) months to 18 (Eighteen) months**
4. Date and time of availability of bid document in the portal: **From 11. 30 hours of Dt. 01.01.2025 to 18.00 hours of Dt. 15.01.2025**
5. Last date/time for receipt of bids in the portal: **18.00 hours of Dt.15.01.2025**
6. Name and address of the Officer inviting Bid: Additional Chief Engineer, Drainage Circle, Gandarpur, Cuttack- 753003. **e-mail id :- sedrainagecirclectc@gmail.com**

Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement portal of Odisha Government **https://tendersodisha.gov.in.** All information, notices, addendum, corrigendum, cancellation notice etc. if required, will be published in this portal.

Sd/- Additional Chief Engineer
Drainage Circle, Cuttack
OIPR-32518/11/0004/2425

बैंक ऑफ महाराष्ट्र Bank of Maharashtra भारत सरकार का उपक्रम एक परिवार एक बैंक

ZONAL OFFICE
New No.25 & 27, Old No.43, Akshaya Shanti, Annasalai, Chennai - 600 002.email : legal_che@mahabank.co.in

DEMAND NOTICE

(Under Section 13(2) of the Securitisation & Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 (SARFAESI ACT) read with Rule 3 (1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rule, 2002).

The account of the following borrower with Bank of Maharashtra having been classified as NPA, the Bank has issued notice under S.13 (2) of the SARFAESI Act on the **05.11.2024.** This public notice is being published for information of all concerned.

(1) M/s. Sri Durga Stone Crushers, (Borrower), S. No.221/5, Kailasapuram Village, Parameshwara Mangalam, Puttur Mandal, Chittoor District, Andhra Pradesh - 517 584. **(2) Mr. M. Sridhar, (Partner/Guarantor),** S/o Late M. Krishnam Naidu, Aikya No.21, 02nd Floor, 28th Cross, 10th Main Road, Banshankari II Stage, Bengaluru - 560 070. **(3) Mr. Nagendra Babu, (Partner/Guarantor),** S/o T. V. Rajgopal, No.3, Sri Venkateshwara Nilaya, 80 feet Road, 03rd Phase, Giri Nagar, Bengaluru - 560 085. **(4) Mr. Madhusudhan, (Partner/Guarantor),** S/o Late M. Krishnam Naidu, Aikya No.21, 02nd Floor, 28th Cross, 10th Main Road, Banshankari II Stage, Bengaluru - 560 070. **(5) Mr. Rajagopal, (Partner/Mortgagor/ Guarantor),** S/o T. V. Venkataswamy Naidu, No.3, Sri Venkateshwara Nilaya, 80 feet Road, 03rd Phase, Giri Nagar, Bengaluru - 560 085. **(6) Mr. Ramesh Babu, (Partner/Guarantor),** S/o Ramchandra Naidu, No.114-1, Senthil Nagar, 07th Cross Street, Kolathur, Chennai - 600 099. **(7) Mrs. Girija, (Mortgagor/Guarantor),** W/o Late Mr. K. Narayan, No.38/1, 14th D Cross, 22nd Main Road, Padmanabhanagar, Bengaluru - 560 061. **(8) Mr. N. Darshan, (Mortgagor/Guarantor),** S/o Late K. Narayan, No.38/1, 14th D Cross, 22nd Main Road, Padmanabhanagar, Bengaluru - 560 061. **(9) Smt. Navya Naidu Raghavan, (Mortgagor/Guarantor),** D/o Late K. Narayan, No.38/1, 14th D Cross, 22nd Main Road, Padmanabhanagar, Bengaluru - 560 061.

The above mentioned Borrower/Guarantors are called upon to pay to Bank of Maharashtra, within 60 days from the date of publication of this notice for a total outstanding Amount as on the date of issue of demand notice is **Rs.6,10,13,978.92 (Rupees Six crores ten lakhs thirteen thousand nine hundred seventy eight and paise ninety two only) as on 05.11.2024** plus unapplied interest at prevailing rate from the date of default plus cost and other expenses etc, within 60 days from the date of receipt of this notice, under the loan/and other agreements and documents executed by the concerned persons. As security for the borrowers' obligation under the said agreements and documents, the assets given below have been charged to Bank of Maharashtra, Valmiki Nagar branch.

If the concerned Borrower/Guarantor shall fail to make payment to Bank of Maharashtra as aforesaid, then the Bank of Maharashtra shall be entitled to proceed against the secured assets under Section 13(4) of the Act and the applicable Rules entirely at the risks of the concerned Borrower/ Guarantor as to the costs and consequences.

In terms of provisions of SARFAESI ACT, the concerned Borrower/ Guarantor are prohibited from transferring the below said assets, in any manner, whether by way of sale, lease or otherwise without the prior written consent of Bank of Maharashtra. Any contravention of the said provisions will render the concerned persons liable for punishment and / or penalty in accordance with the SARFAESI Act.

The Borrower's attention is invited to the provision of sub-section 8 of Sec 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

DESCRIPTION OF MORTGAGED PROPERTY

1. All that piece and parcel of the immovable property bearing Municipal No.3 (Old No.15/3) PID No.54-201-3, measuring - East to West 40 & North to South (70 + 62)/2 totally measuring 2640 Sq. ft. situated at Avalahalli Village, Uttarahalli Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk. Boundaries - East : Property No.2, West : Property No.4, North : Road, South: Private Property.

2. All that piece and parcel of the immovable property bearing Southern portion of Plot No.74, Sy. No.27, 28, 31 & 32 of Bandenallsandra Village measuring - East to West 50 mtrs, North to South on Eastern side 47.30 mtrs and on Western side 46.30 mtrs, in all measuring 2399.22 Sq. mtrs or 25180 Sq. ft., situated at Bandenallasandra Village, Jigani Hobli, Anekal Taluk, Bengaluru. Boundaries - East : Road, West : Plot No.111, North : Remaining portion of Plot No.74, South : Road.

3. Schedule A : All that piece and parcel of land situated at Parameswara Mangalam Village, Chittoor District, Old S. No.221/2, 221/3, 221/4, New Survey No.221/2 - Acres 0.2900, 221/3 - Acre 0.3800, 221/4A - Acre 0.1600, 221/4B - Acre 0.0500, total extent Acres 0.88 or Hectare 0.3540. Bounded on - North : Land in Survey No.221/1, South : Schedule B land, East : Tirupathi to Chennai National Highway Road, West : Gutta. Situated within Nagari SRO, Chittoor District. **Schedule B :** Ground Floor with RCC Building in Survey No.221/5 an extent of 0.81 Acres situated at Parameswara Mangalam Village, Chittor District, Puttur Mandal, Chittoor Old S. No.221/5, New Survey No.221/5, an extent of Acre 0.8100 or Hectare 0.3280. Bounded on - North : Schedule A land, South : Gutta & Temple land, East : Tirupathi to Chennai National Highway, West : Gutta.Situated within Nagari SRO, Chittoor District.

Place : Chennai **Authorised Officer,**
Date : 29.12.2024 **Bank of Maharashtra.**

PUBLIC NOTICE
TO WHOMSOEVER IT MAY CONCERN

Through this notice, the concerned and general public at large are hereby informed that Shri G. Meenakshi Natha Pillai with last known address at No.5/564, Krishna Puram, Opp. to TCWS- Ration shop, Thanjavur 613004, who was an employee of South Zone Cultural Centre (SZCC), Ministry of Culture, Government of India, Medical College Road, Thanjavur -613 004 and under suspension w.e.f. 08.11.2023 has been dismissed from the service of SZCC w.e.f 23.12.2024 (A.N) after a Departmental Enquiry as it has been found that he was involved in malpractices and has defrauded the institution. The case has been referred to the CBI for criminal investigation.

The general public is hereby cautioned that Shri G. Meenakshi Natha Pillai has no authority to work or function on behalf of the South Zone Cultural Centre, Thanjavur. Any individual or institution dealing with him will be doing so at their own risk and responsibility. It is important to note that the SZCC or the Ministry of Culture, Govt of India, shall not be responsible for any such dealings with the said dismissed employee, Shri G. Meenakshi Natha Pillai, in any manner.

By Order
Director cum Disciplinary Authority
South Zone Cultural Centre,
Thanjavur -613004.

Every Friday with THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS
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ICICI Bank
ICICI Bank Limited
(Registered Office: ICICI Bank Tower, Near Chakli Circle, Old Padra Road, Vadodara, Gujarat-390 007)
Regional Office: ICICI Bank Towers, Shobha Pearl, 1, Commissariat Road, Bangalore, Karnataka - 560 001

POSSESSION NOTICE (for immovable property)
[Rule – 8(1) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002]

The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ICICI Bank Limited,a company incorporated under the Companies Act, 1956 and a banking company within the meaning of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 and having its registered office at ICICI Bank Tower,Near Chakli Circle, Old Padra Road, Vadodara - 390 007, and its corporate office at ICICI Bank Towers, Bandra Kurla Complex, Bandra, Mumbai 400 051, under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (hereinafter the "said Act)and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued a demand notice dated **22.11.2019** bearing reference No. ICICI01/2019-20 calling upon the **borrower Shore Dwellings Private Limited (earlier known as Mantri Dwellings Private Limited),** Mantri House, No.41, Vittal Mallya Road, Bangalore, Karnataka - 560 001 (hereinafter the "Borrower"), and **Mantri Developers Private Limited** and **Plaza Agencies Private Limited** (hereinafter collectively referred to as the **("Corporate Guarantor"),** to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being **Rs. 53,62,63,047/- (Rupees Fifty Three Crore Sixty Two Lakh Sixty Three Thousand and Forty Seven Only)** calculated as on November 21, 2019with further interest and other costs & charges, within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The Borrower and Corporate Guarantor having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower, Corporate Guarantor and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/ her under sub-section (4) of section 13 of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 on this the **23rd day of December of the year 2024.**

The Borrower and Corporate Guarantor in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the properties and any dealings with the properties will be subject to the charge of ICICI Bank Limited, for an amount of **Rs.1,20,00,54,425/- (Rupees One Hundred and Twenty Crore Fifty Four Thousand and Four Hundred and Twenty Five Only)** as on **15-11-2024** and further interest thereon.

The Borrower and Corporate Guarantor's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Description of the Immovable Properties: (Mantri Vantage, Pune) All that piece and parcel of the non-agricultural land admeasuring 15,063.68 sq. mtrs., which is out of and forming part of the land bearing S. No. 16 Hissa No. 4A admeasuring 27,100 sq.mtrs,situated at village Kharadi, Taluka Haveli, District Puneand bounded by the following: East: Part of Sy. No.16, Hissa No. 4B, West: Sy.No.16, Hissa No. 3, North: Sy. No. 15, South: Part by amenity space of sanctioned layout and partly by area under D.P. Road, together with the Borrower's share of approx. **3,50,701 sq.ft** saleable area (built-up area) out of the total saleable area (built-up area) of approx. **5,17,105 sq. ft.** in the project namely "Mantri Vantage",being constructed on the property, which are more specifically mentioned in registered Deed Nos. stated below: **i.** Development agreement No. 6204/2006; **ii.** Power of Attorney No. 3198/2013; **iii.**Power of Attorney No. 3199/2013; **iv.** Conveyance Deed No. 3197/2013 and other related documents, and **v.** Sale Deed no 1057/1996, **vi.** Sale Deed no 1058/1996, **vii.** Sale Deed no 1059/1996, **viii.** And other prior title documents. excluding the units together with the respective proportionate undivided share of land for which registered sale deed/sale agreement between Borrower and buyers has been made,subject to payment of amount to the bank as per the specific NOC issued for the respective units.

Date : 23.12.2024 **Authorized Officer,**
Place : Pune, Maharashtra **ICICI Bank Limited**

Equitas Small Finance Bank Ltd
(FORMERLY KNOWN AS EQUITAS FINANCE LTD)
Registered Office : No.769, Spencer Plaza, 4th Floor, Phase-II, Anna Salai, Chennai - 600002.

POSSESSION NOTICE (U/s. Rule 8 (1) - for immovable property)

Whereas the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of M/s. Equitas Small Finance Bank Limited, under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest [Act, 2002 (54 of 2002)] and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with [Rule 3] of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued a Demand Notice calling upon the below mentioned Borrowers to repay thetotal outstanding amount mentioned in the notice being within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. Since the below mentioned Borrowers having failed to repay the below stated amount within the stipulated time, notice is hereby given to the below mentioned borrowers andthe public in general that, the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under Sub-Section (4) of Section 13 of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the Security interest Enforcement Rules, 2002. The Borrowers in particularand the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the schedule mentioned properties and any dealings with the properties will be subject to the charge of M/s. Equitas Small Finance Bank Limited and further interest and other charges thereon." The Borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub–section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets."

SR NO	Name of the Borrower(s) / Guarantor(s)	Description of Secured Asset (Immovable Property)	Demand Notice Date and Amount	Possession taken date
1.	BRANCH - Peenya Loan No - SEMSNRD0133568 BORROWER - MRS. RATHNAMMA Co-Borrower - MR. N PRATHAPA, Mr. N Kiran	All the piece and parcel of the immovable property bearing old no.23/7/1530/19, East to West 12.5 feet North to South 25 feet total extent 312.5. Situated at Vaddarapalya(shivanapalya) village ward no.130, Ullalu, Kengeri Hobli Bangalore south, now comes under BBMP Property No. 422, Katha No. 1737/1530/19. bounded on: North by: 5 feet passage of same property, private property, South by : Gurappa's Property, East by: Road, West by: Venkatesh's Property. Measurement: East to West 12.5 feet North to South 25 feet total extent 312.5. Situated at within the Sub-Registration District of Jayanagara and Registration District of Bangalore	08-10-2024 & 1,83,438	27.12.2024

Date - 29.12.2024, Place - Bangalore **Authorized officer , Equitas Small Finance Bank Ltd**

YES BANK Yes Bank Limited
Prestige obelisk, Municipal No.3, Ground Floor, Kasturba Road, Banglore - 560001

POSSESSION NOTICE (U/s. Rule 8 (1) - for immovable property)

The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of YES Bank Ltd. under the provisions of the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financials Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act,2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Sec.13(12) read with rule 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued demand notices calling upon the respective borrowers mentioned hereunder to repay the amounts mentioned in the respective notices U/s.13(2) of the said Act within a period of 60 days.

The respective borrowers having failed to repay the said amounts, notice is hereby given to the borrowers and public in general that the undersigned has taken symbolic possession of the properties described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on me under Sec.13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 9 of the said Rules.

The respective borrowers in particular and public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the said properties and any dealing with these properties will be subject to the charge of the YES Bank Ltd. for the respective amount mentioned herein below along with interest thereon at contracted rate.

Sr. No.1	Agreement No.: 6752111	Type of Loan: MIB	O/s. As per 13(2) Notice: Rs. 22,24,055.57	Sec.13(2) Notice Date:- 8-1-2024	Symbolic Date: 27-12-2024

Name of Borrowers, co-borrowers, guarantors, Mortgagors: Mr.Mugadalabetta Venkataramaiah Raghuram (Borrower),2.) M/S. S L V Marketing,3. Sri. M V Raghuram (Proprietor of M/s. S L V Marketing),4. Smt. YN Nandhini, (Proprietor of M/s. S L V Marketing),4. Smt. M V Vijayalakshmi,5. Smt. M V Shobha, 6.Sri.M.V.Ramesh, 7.Sri.M.V.Srinivas, Details of secured asset 1) Property bearing no.1 formed in Sy. No. 10 having PID No.54-82-1, situated in Sri Lakshminarasimha Housing Society Limited, now Sir MV Marg behind Vidyapeeta, BSK III Stage Bangalore, measuring east to west 51 + 50/2 feet and north to west 35.6 feet. East by : Road, West by: Site No.13, North by: Road, South by: Site No.2. 2) All that piece and parcel of residential house property bearing Site No.670, New Municipal No.29, Old PID No.52-48-29, New PID No.155-W0215-6 situated at Sunkenahalli, Adjacent Sites extensions, Bangalore, presently within the limits of Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike, Old ward no.52, New ward no.155, AA NA Subbarao Road, Hanumanth Nagar Bangalore, measuring east to west 7.02 meters or 23 feet and north to south 10.97 meters or 36.00 feet in total 77.00 square meters or 828 square feet. East by : Site No.669, West by: Site No.670/A, North by: Site No.671/A, South by : Road.

This is to bring to your attention that under Sec.13(8) of SARFAESI Act, where the number of dues of the secured creditor together with all costs, charges and expenses incurred by secured creditor is tendered to the secured creditor at any time before the date of publication of notice for the public auction/ tender/ private treaty, the secured asset shall not be sold or transferred and no further steps shall be taken for transfer or sale of that secured asset.

Date : 29-12-2024 , Place : Bangalore **Sd/- Authorized officer, For YES BANK Limited**

₹912 CRORE total voluntary contribution received by PM Cares Fund in the financial year 2022-23, which is lowest since the trust was created in March 2020

21% yearly jump in avg residential price in top 7 cities – from ₹7,080/sq. ft to ₹8,590/sq. ft

Luxury housing mkt shines in 2024

ARSHAD KHAN @ New Delhi

DEMAND for lavish and luxurious housing projects remained resilient in 2024 despite a sharp surge in property prices. This particular segment defied a slowdown in economic growth as the growing tribe of high-net-worth individuals did not shy away from making big-ticket purchases.

As per data issued by real estate consultant firm Anarock, housing prices rose between 13-30% year-on-year in 2024 across the top 7 cities, primarily due to increased input costs and strong homebuyer demand. Delhi-NCR recorded the highest yearly jump of 30% in average residential housing price – from ₹5,800 per sq. ft. in 2023 to nearly ₹7,550 per sq. ft. in 2024. The top 7 cities together saw a 21% yearly jump in average residential price – from ₹7,080 per sq. ft. in Q4 2023 to over ₹8,590 per sq. ft. in Q4 2024.

While this steep increase impacted overall housing sales in 2024, luxury housing demand and new supply increased exponentially in 2024. "The new luxury supply addition across the top 7 cities rose by 24% in 2024 against 2023. There is no reason to expect luxury housing demand to taper off in 2025," said Anarock. The country's largest real estate developer - DLF - said 2024 has been an encouraging period for the real estate sector, with markets across the country witnessing positive momentum, a trend that continues into 2025.

"For us at DLF, the year began with the remarkable success of two consecutive launches within the DLF Privana ecosystem in Gurugram, both achieving complete sell-outs in under a week during their pre-launch phase. This milestone underscores the robust demand for premium real estate and Gurugram's status as a key hub for luxury living," said Aakash Ohri, JMD & Chief Business Officer, DLF Homes.

DLF achieved a milestone with the ₹190 crore sale of an apartment in its Camellias project and is now set to launch The Dahlias in Gurugram, poised to become India's most expensive residential project. Comprising 400 residences with starting prices of ₹80,000 per sq. ft., the average ticket size is expected to hover nearly ₹100 crore, as per PropEquity.

Ohri said the demand for luxury homes remained resilient, contrary to the perception of a slowdown, as buyers increasingly seek expansive, well-designed residences with world-class amenities that cater to their elevated lifestyles.

Besides DLF, other top-tier players like Godrej Properties, Macrotech Developers (Lodha), Oberoi Realty and Prestige Estate recorded robust demand for their luxurious properties. Samir Jasuja, founder & CEO, PropEquity said luxury housing continued its dominance which is reflected in the fact that the market size of apartments, priced over Rs 5 crore has gone up from $4 billion to $16 billion in the last 4 years witnessing 4x growth.

Sunny Bijlani, joint MD at Supreme Universal stated that in 2023, luxury segment achieved a historic milestone with a 12-15% YoY rise in sales, a trend that strongly continued in 2024. "This year, Mumbai documented a 13% rise in prime residential property prices, reflecting the growing appetite for premium high-end homes in the city. This momentum is expected to continue into 2025, with the premium realty market poised for more dynamic growth. The new generation of buyers, increasingly drawn to bespoke residences in prime locations such as South Mumbai and Bandra are fueling this demand," said Bijlani.

While the luxury segment grew, overall housing sales across top seven cities recorded a 4% decline, with approximately 4,59,650 units sold in 2024 compared to 4,76,530 units in 2023, as per Anarock data.

Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) saw the highest sales of about 1,55,335 units in 2024, registering a 1% yearly rise. Pune followed with 81,090 units sold, down 6% YoY. Among other cities, Bengaluru saw a 2% surge in sales. Demand fell in Kolkata (20%) and Chennai (11%), followed by a 5% fall in Hyderabad, and a 6% decline each in Pune and Delhi NCR.

RUSH FOR LUXURY ABODE

Housing prices rose between 13-30% YoY in 2024 across the **7 CITIES**

RISE IN HOUSING PRICES IS PRIMARILY DUE TO INCREASED INPUT COSTS AND STRONG HOMEBUYER DEMAND

STEEP INCREASE IN PRICE IMPACTED OVERALL HOUSING SALES IN 2024, LUXURY HOUSING DEMAND AND NEW SUPPLY INCREASED EXPONENTIALLY

DLF achieved a milestone with the **₹190 CR** sale of an apartment in its Camellias project

Delhi-NCR recorded the highest yearly jump of **30%** in average residential housing price – from **₹5,800 per sq. ft.** in 2023 to nearly **₹7,550 per sq. ft.**

IN 2024

DLF is now set to launch The Dahlias in Gurugram, which is poised to become the country's most expensive residential project

NEWSCOPE

MISSING THE WOOD FOR THE TREES

GURBIR SINGH

FORESTS are a natural resource crucial to feeding and regulating rainfall cycles. They also provide essential biodiversity – being home to millions of species of plants and animals –for the coupled existence of humankind and nature. As the bells toll louder on climate change, forests are the first line of defense. They act as a carbon sink, absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and storing it in their wood, and soil.

On the other hand, deforestation and degradation of forests releases carbon dioxide back into the atmosphere, driving up temperatures and triggering climate catastrophe. Between 2001 and 2020, global forests lost 10% of their area coverage, releasing 165 gigatons of carbon dioxide.

It was music to the ears when the India State of Forest Report (ISFR) 2023, released by the Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Bhupender Yadav, announced India's forest and tree cover had increased to just over a quarter – or 25.17% – of the country's geographical area. The minister said there had been an increase of 1,445 square kilometers of forest and tree cover over the last count in 2021.

After all the back-thumping, much of the data has been met with a degree of skepticism. The high numbers have been drummed up by including commercial bamboo plantations, coconut groves and orchards, Kerala's former principal chief conservator of forests, Prakriti Srivastava, conservationist researcher Krithika Sampath and former National Board for Wildlife member Prerna Singh Bindra, told PTI. Calling it "another faulty report with inflated data", they claimed 1,488 sq km of 'unclassed forests' or non-notified forests under government ownership had vanished between 2021 and 2023. A former principal chief conservator of Forests of Karnataka, BK Singh, told the environmental magazine Mongabay, while plantations are increasing 18,000 sq. km. annually, forest and tree cover was shown to have gone up by a megre 1,400 sq. km in two years. Either the forests are being cut and plantations are partly supplementing the deficit; or a major chunk of plantations are failing. An inquiry would be in order, Mr B.K. Singh said.

The Forest Survey does admit the decline in forest cover in eco-sensitive zones like the Western Ghats, and the lower Himalayas. The report concedes, for example, the Western Ghats Eco-Sensitive Areas (WGESA) have lost 58.22 sq km of forest cover, while the north-east lost 327 sq km. The impact of the deforestation was seen less than 6 months ago in Kerala's Wayanad region. Incessant rains brought down denuded sections of the hills on the villages below killing over 250 persons.

SOURAV ROY

While anecdotal evidence points to the retreat of core forests falling to mining and road building activity, 'flexible' interpretations of what constitutes 'trees' and 'forest cover' ensures the picture remains rosy and green. The earlier 2021 'State of Forest Report' released in January 2022 claimed the country's forest and tree cover had gone up by 2,261 sq km since the last assessment in 2019. Contrary to this, in April this year, Global Forest Watch (GFW) released a report based on satellite imagery on the losses of forest cover on a world scale. GFW said India had lost 23,300 sq km of tree cover between 2000 and 2023, an area slightly larger than the state of Meghalaya. As much as 18% of this denudation was of humid, primary forests that are the most efficient carbon sinks to stem climate change.

The shocking revelations by Global Forest Watch (GSW) of the state of forests prompted the National Green Tribunal to take up the matter sou motu. It issued notices on May 20 to central ministries for breach of provisions of the Forest Conservation Act, 1980, the Air (Prevention and Control of Po lution) Act, 1981 and the Environment Protection Act, 1986. The Survey of India, which conducts biennial forest cover survey, was made a party to explain its claims that forest cover had been rising. In view of the conflicting data and methodologies, legal closure on the controversy is nowhere in sight. But why is the government dressing up the data on forest cover brazenly? Besides acclaim, is it to earn carbon credits? Forest cover is linked with the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) commitments countries have made towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions. If they reach the set targets, they earn handsomely in carbon credits.

The government release on the 2023 forest survey gives the game away. It claims in respect of the "target under NDC related to carbon sequestration, the current assessment shows India's carbon stock has reached 30.43 billion tonnes of CO2 equivalent; which indicates that as against the base year of 2005, India has reached 2.29 billion tonnes of additional carbon sink, as against the target of 2.5 to 3.0 billion tonne by 2030."

In actual fact, our natural forests are dying; and the annual weather cycle of rainfall and the charging of our rivers and streams crucial to the agricultural economy are in extreme danger. But to reverse the denudation of our forests one has to first accept that a problem exists.

Russia aims to double tourism GDP by 2030 from India, China

RAKESH KUMAR @ New Delhi

RUSSIA is looking to double its GDP contribution from tourism by 2030, increasing it from 3.8% to about 10%. The country has increased investment in the tourism sector and set to launch its new national project "Tourism and Hospitality" in 2025 to attract more tourists.

Evgeny Kozlov, chairman of the Moscow City Tourism Committee, speaking to TNIE said Moscow will prioritise attracting tourists and MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions) from India and China. He mentioned that to boost tourist arrivals from India, Russia has liberalised visa regime, introducing e-visa. Kozlov said the number of Indian tourists visiting Russia in the first half of 2024 reached 28,500, a 1.5-fold rise as against the same period in 2023.

"From August 1, 2023, holders of Indian passports can apply for e-visa, which is fast (issued within 4 days), easy (no invitations or confirmations required), and convenient to get (online)," said Evgeny Kozlov.

Kozlov said its tourism industry has generated revenue exceeding 1.3 trillion rubles ($12.35 bn), surpassing the record set before the pandemic in 2019. By 2030, they expect that the impact of tourism on Moscow's economy will be even greater. As per forecasts, by 2030, revenue from tourism will grow 2.7 times, reaching 3.6 trillion rubles ($34.2 bn).

However, Kozlov said the transport links between Moscow and India still need to be improved. He said at the moment, there is only one airline that operates flights between India and Moscow."I would like to encourage the Indian government and airlines to consider introducing direct flights to Moscow to meet growing demand of travelers."

Gajesh Giridhar, founder and national coordinator of the Network of Indian MICE Agents (NIMA), agreed with Kozlov's request for improved air connectivity. He said destinations like Baku and Thailand enjoy significant popularity among Indian travellers due to better flight connectivity.

'Indian govt should consider direct flights to Russia'

Gajesh Giridhar, founder and national coordinator of the Network of Indian MICE Agents (NIMA), proposed that the Indian govt should consider establishing direct flights to Russia and its capital city, Moscow to increase number of Indian tourists traveling to the country.

RIL acquires Karkinos for ₹375 crore

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

MUKESH AMBANI-led Reliance Industries on Saturday said it has acquired technology-driven and oncology-focused healthcare platform Karkinos for ₹375 crore.

Reliance Strategic Business Ventures (RSBVL), a wholly-owned subsidiary of India's most valuable company, completed the acquisition of Karkinos Healthcare with allotment of requisite shares, the company said in a stock exchange filing. Karkinos was incorporated in India on July 24, 2020, and is in the business of providing technology-driven innovative solutions for the early detection, diagnosis, and management of cancer. It had a turnover of about ₹22 crore in the 2022-23 fiscal.

RSBVL has on December 27, 2024, subscribed to and has been allotted 1 crore equity shares of ₹10 each, for cash, aggregating ₹10 crore and 36.5 crore optionally fully convertible debentures of ₹10 each.

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ Mumbai

Credila Financial files for ₹5,000 crore public issue

CREDILA Financial Services, formerly HDFC Credila Financial Services, has filed the prefiled draft papers with markets regulator Sebi for an initial public offer through which it plans to raise ₹5,000 crore.

Credila Financial is the largest education loan provider in the country. The mortgage major HDFC was forced to sell it in the run-up to its reverse merger with its banking arm HDFC Bank, which came into play from last July.

Since its founding in 2006, the company has grown to become the largest player in the $200 billion worth education loan market, offering both secured and unsecured education loans. Currently, 21% of its books is secured and the rest 79% is unsecured.

The shareholders of the city-based non-deposit taking non-bank at an extra-ordinary general meeting held on December 26 unanimously passed a special resolution to or raise capital through an IPO, which will be a mix of fresh issue and offer for sale.

Under the deal, which was a precondition for the reverse merger to go through, HDFC sold 90% stake in Credila to Baring Private Equity Asia (BPEA)-EQT Group and the domestic private equity player ChrysCapital for ₹9,060.5 crore. The RBI asked HDFC Bank not to hold more than 10% in the company post-merger. The $40-billion HDFC-HDFC Bank merger is the largest in the history of India Inc.

Under the deal, HDFC Credila had also received a subscription amount of up to ₹2,003.6 crore. The HDFC's stake was acquired by Kopvoorn BV, Moss Investments, Defati Investments Holding and Infinity Partners.

Voda repays ₹11.6k cr debt, releases pledge on Vi shares

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

UK-based Vodafone Group has cleared its outstanding dues of nearly ₹11,650 crore (about 109 million pounds) that it had raised against shares of Vodafone Idea.

Vodafone Group had pledged nearly its entire stake in VIL to secure the debt. The pledge was created in favour of HSBC Corporate Trustee Company (UK) for the debt raised by Mauritius and India-based entities of Vodafone Group". On December 27, 2024, HSBC Corporate Trustee Company (UK) acting as security trustee for the lenders has released the pledges pursuant to repayment of the outstanding dues owed to the lenders by the Vodafone promoter shareholders," said the company in an exchange filing.

Following the repayment, HSBC Corporate Trustee Company (UK) Limited has released the pledges on 15,720,826,860 equity shares of Vodafone Idea held by Vodafone Promoter Shareholders. These shares represent 22.56% of Vodafone Idea's equity share capital on a fully diluted basis. The released shares are valued at nearly ₹11,649 crore, based on the closing price of ₹7.41 per share of Vodafone Idea stock on Friday. Vodafone Group holds a 22.56% stake in Vodafone Idea, while the Aditya Birla Group holds 14.76%. The Indian government has a 23.15% stake in the company as of September 30, 2024.

South Eastern Railway celebrates 69th Railway week - Vishisht Rail Seva Puraskar, 2024

Kolkata: South Eastern Railway celebrated the 69th Railway Week-Vishisht Rail Seva Puraskar, 2024 at Kolkata on 26.12.2024. Shri Anil Kumar Mishra, General Manager, South Eastern Railway, graced the occasion as Chief Guest. Shri Soumitra Majumdar, Addl. General Manager, Shri Surinder Pal, Senior Deputy General Manager along with all Principal Head of the Departments attended the function. Altogether, 82 selected railway officers & staff were felicitatedin recognition of their outstanding services and devotion to duty during the year 2023-24. Total 32 Efficiency Shields were also presented to the Divisions/ Units. The Overall Efficiency Shield was awarded to Adra Division for the best all round performance. Efficiency Shields in other categories were also awarded to different divisions, workshops and stations.

Business & Beyond

Mega SHG loan mela held by IOB

Leading bank, Indian Overseas Bank has organized a MEGA SHG LOAN MELA at REBANANUAGAON. The event was host by its Gorual Branch. In this occasion AGM Ajit Kumar Patra, LDM Kishore Kumar Acharya, FI Coordinator M K Patra, FLC Councilor Nilamber Mohanta, BPM and BPC staffs were present. The bank distributed sanction advice of 32 SHG accounts around Rs.2.00 crore. Also they share knowledge to the SHG members regarding "Financial Literacy Campaign".

Bank of Maharashtra opens its 56th branch of Bhubaneswar Zone, Odisha

Bank of Maharashtra, one of premiere public sector bank has opened a new branch at Gopalpur, Cuttack. Now Bank of Maharashtra has 5 branches in Cuttack city & 56 branches in the state of Odisha and 2531st Branch in India. The bank also announced its plans to further strengthen its presence and customer reach in Bhubaneswar Zone. The new branch was inaugurated by Dr. Pragyansmita Sahoo, IES, Director, Institutional Finance, Govt. of Odisha in presence of Zonal Manager Shri Alok Kumar Misha and Branch Manager Shri Somya Ranjan Bindhani. Commenting on the recent branch expansion in Bhubaneswar, Mr. Alok Kumar Mishra, Zonal Manager, Bank of Maharashtra Bhubaneswar Zone has said "we are happy to inaugurate one more branch in Cuttack, a rapidly growing and strategically important in the State of Odisha.

Kyrgios criticizes Swiatek, Sinner for doping-related issues

Nick Kyrgios hasn't minced his words in referring to doping-related charges against Jannik Sinner and Iga Swiatek, labelling breaches of the sport's anti-doping program as "disgusting for our sport." "Two World No 1s both getting done for doping is disgusting for our sport. It's a horrible look," Kyrgios said on Saturday.

NITISH K REDDY
A STAR IS BORN

Youngster from Andhra cracks scintillating ton to stamp his arrival, rescues India in the process; Family support & vital lessons at domestic setup reasons behind his rise

IMAGINE being Mutyala Reddy right now. You are at the lower stands of the Melbourne Cricket Ground with your wife and daughter. Your son Nitish K Reddy — the one you have been with every step of the way, watching and doing everything in your power to help him in his cricket — runs towards you, kneels in front of you and dedicates a hundred, his first one for India in Test cricket, to you and your family.

Mutyala lived all of those emotions at the MCG on Saturday. He let out all your pent-up emotions. By his side was his wife, visibly in tears as he let out a roar and felt as proud as he had ever been of his son. Just as Nitish walked across the field, he saw the entire Indian team and support staff gather around to welcome his son on the boundary ropes. He, along with Washington Sundar, had just saved the day for India in front of 83,000 fans in a crucial Test match against Australia. He couldn't control your tears even when he was getting interviewed by Adam Gilchrist and Michael Vaughan where he tried to describe what had been an unforgettable day.

Just as the umpires called stumps, with Nitish remaining unbeaten on 105, the Reddy family got swarmed by the fans. They slowly tried to move towards the exit, but could not. Fans, who got their voice because of what his son did on the field for India, and the media, who wanted to record this historic moment, kind of, mobbed his family and tried to walk with them. Everyone wanted to know what it felt like to be Nitish's father, what it was like to be here in this moment to witness his 21-year-old son rise to the occasion and announce his arrival as an international cricketer.

What must it feel like to be Mutyala Reddy?

"You work hard all these years for that moment, isn't it?," Hanuma Vihari, who was Nitish's captain when he made his List A debut for Andhra, tried to explain. "To make your family proud, to make your country proud and also to get your first Test hundred is a dream come true. First hundred is always special and that feeling, I don't think you can express in words," Vihari, who was India's hero in Sydney three years ago, told this daily.

Nitish grabbed the limelight in this year's Indian Premier League and has been fast-tracked since to international cricket. One of the first things that got noticed as Nitish took on Nathan Lyon and Scott Boland on Saturday at the MCG is his first-class record. A batting average of 23.36 and a bowling average of 27.69 could take one by surprise but not for Vihari, who has seen the youngster from the U-16 level. It was at that stage where Nitish made his mark. He smashed 1237 runs at 176.71 in seven games for Andhra in the 2017-18 Vijay Merchant Trophy. In less than three years, he was playing first-class cricket for Andhra.

Vihari was his captain in his early days as Nitish made his List A debut. "When he was 17, I asked the selectors if it was time to promote him to the senior level because those kinds of cricketers are quite rare in India — batting top of the order and bowling medium pace. I knew it was too early, but I wanted to groom him. So we played him in a Vijay Hazare match against Vidarbha and I sent him number four. He got a fifty in his first game. Then from there onwards, we groomed him more as a bowler who can bat at number seven in first-class cricket because we were short of fast bowlers and we groomed him that way," recalled a proud Vihari.

Today, Nitish did not just make his family proud, but also Vihari, former chief selector MSK Prasad, Andhra Cricket and the country. "I cannot be more proud of him," said an elated Vihari. "He's a really hard-working cricketer and the way he's adapted his game to international cricket is quite amazing. You can see his domestic record is not that great, but the way he's adapted his game and to have the confidence to perform in Australia, to play in those conditions and achieve what he's done is quite remarkable," he added.

Prasad, too, struggled to find words to express his feelings. "Unbelievable," says Prasad. "I have seen a wonderful story in front of my eyes. Ever since I saw him somewhere in 2012-13 to now in 2024, I'm seeing a small kid growing into a man and scoring against Australia, in Australia, in an iconic venue. Unbelievable," he mentioned.

Both Vihari and Prasad acknowledge that Nitish's bowling is a work in progress, but the prospect of what he has to offer for Indian cricket is something they are thrilled about. "He's on par with any of the top-order batters. Yes, he's definitely working with regard to his bowling. And he will definitely step up. If he can do it in one discipline, he can always do that in the other. And I hope that slowly, he will be regarded as one of the best all-rounders in this country," said Prasad.

"I think it's going to be exciting for him. He can be competitive. I think he'll be in the top six in the coming season. And also, if he can improve his bowling a little bit, he will offer a lot. If he's playing in an Indian condition as a batter then in England, he can bat at number six and have that extra medium-pace option and play one or two spinners, whatever the combination they feel like. But I think he'll give you that extra cushion with the bat and also with the ball, which not many teams have. I think if India can groom him really well, he'll be an asset for the next coming decade," Vihari added.

While the future will unfold itself for Nitish and Indian cricket, Saturday, December 28, 2024, is set in stone for years to come. And it is something the Reddy family, Prasad and Vihari will fondly remember for the rest of their lives.

Nitish Kumar Reddy celebrates after reaching the three-figure mark on Saturday | AP

SCOREBOARD

Australia: 474. India 1st Innings (o/n 164/5): Pant c Lyon b Boland 28; Jadeja lbw Lyon 17; Nitish 105 n.o; Washington c Smith b Lyon 50; Bumrah c Khawaja b Cummins 0; Siraj 2 n.o. **Extras:** (LB-2, NB-4, W-5) 11. **Total:** (For 9 wkts in 116 ovs) 358. **FoWs:** 1-8, 2-51, 3-153, 4-154, 5-159, 6-191, 7-221, 8-348, 9-350. **Bowling:** Starc 25-2-86-0, Cummins 27-6-86-3, Boland 27-7-57-3, Lyon 27-4-88-2, Marsh 7-1-28-0, Head 3-0-11-0.

Washington plays supporting role in India's fightback

GOMESH S @Chennai

SCOTT Boland was running at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. It is his backyard. Every time he turns up there, the Victorian pacer has done something special. On Saturday, he was going up against Nitish K Reddy. The two have already played against each other at the same venue. It was last month, India A versus Australia A.

This, however, was different. In the fourth Test between India and Australia with record crowd attendance for a Boxing Day Test at the MCG, the duel was on the expected line -- intense. So was the match and the series. India had slowly rebuilt thanks to Washington Sundar and Reddy but with the lead ahead of them, and having already lost seven wickets, things could go south on any given moment.

Here was Boland running with the second new ball that was only six overs old. And usually, this is where the Victorian thrives. He knew Reddy had been charging at him and brought up Alex Carey to the Indian. For Australia, it was all about inducing that one mistake. Reddy, and Washington, were very much aware of it. Even if they weren't, messages kept coming from the dressing room on what's required from them. Reddy, meanwhile, was not going to let Boland set the tone. Anything that is in his zone he was going to take it. First came the straight drive down the ground and then followed the off-drive to Nathan Lyon. Reddy, having already past his fifty, was in no mood to be bogged down. He had played at this venue before for India A, but that was a rather empty ground. Here, in front of 83,000 fans, Reddy showed that he belongs at this level.

Washington Sundar ably supported Nitish Kumar Reddy with 50 off 162 balls | AP

He left balls when needed but never missed a chance to score. To counter whatever little assistance the pacers were getting, he charged at them, used the crease and took calculative risks. What it also did was allow Washington to be patient and play his natural game without thinking about the scoreboard. They had played similar amount of deliveries at times while Washington was batting at a strike rate of less than 50 and Reddy close to 70.

That they are from South India and had played for the same Indian Premier League team — Sunrisers Hyderabad -- also helped. All Washington had to do was keep reminding what was needed and what their goal was. By this time, Reddy had already gotten to his fifty and even celebrated with a gesture from the Telugu movie Pushpa. That is when the crowd found their voice. Till then, India seemed to have lost their way.

In particular, Rishabh Pant. The keeper-batter had pulled out before Boland bowled a delivery. He had looked comfortable in the middle and runs were coming. But then, out of the blue, he brought out the scoop and that didn't work. On the very next ball, he tried again and this time the ball took a leading edge and he was caught at deep third man. It was such a dismissal that even Sunil Gavaskar lost his cool on air. Calling it stupid, Gavaskar said that Pant should probably go to Australia dressing room than India's. Jadeja fell shortly after and it left Reddy and Washington a mountain to climb — one that was 253 runs tall.

Washington, who had expressed his confidence the previous day, backed it up with performance and so did Reddy. By the time tea was taken early due to rain, they looked set to bat through the day. However, the showers meant the pitch was sticky after and they decided to bat time. The duo was not in a hurry. Over the next ten overs post rain-break, only 13 runs would come. Washington got to his fifty and Reddy was closing in on his century.

Just when it seemed like both were going to bat through the day, the off-spinning all-rounder got out. With Jasprit Bumrah falling soon after, tension ensued. Can Reddy get to his ton? Or will he be left stranded? Guiding Mohammed Siraj, Reddy batted through and then eventually brought up his century — first of many to come and in front of his family — with a shot down the ground. He ran towards them, this time taking a leaf out of Bahubali movie — and dedicated it top his dad, mom and sister who were in the stands.

BFC post thrilling away win over Chennaiyin FC

ENS/AGENCIES @ Chennai/Hyderabad

RYAN Williams scored a brace as Bengaluru FC posted a thrilling 4-2 victory over Chennaiyin FC in the Indian Super League at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in Chennai on Saturday.

Sunil Chhetri was also on the scoresheet as Bengaluru (27) closed the gap on Mohun Bagan Super Giant (29) at the top to only two points. Irfan Yadwad and Lalrinliana Hnamte were on the scoresheet for the home team. For Chennaiyin, this was their second successive defeat and their seventh loss of the season. In the earlier match, Hyderabad FC and East Bengal FC played out a 1-1 draw. Hyderabad had to wait until the 90th minute mark to snatch a point. After a goalless opening period of play, it was the away side who broke the deadlock in the hour mark, thanks to Jeakson Singh. However, Manoj Mohammed scored the equaliser with a left-footed drive in the nick of time.

Bengaluru FC players celebrate a goal against Chennaiyin FC on Saturday | ISL

Arsenal maintain title pursuit with narrow victory

AGENCIES @ London

DECLAN Rice is hoping 2025 brings silverware for Arsenal but knows they need some help to deny a rampant Liverpool the Premier League title. The Gunners moved second in the table with a 1-0 win over Ipswich on Friday but remain six points behind Liverpool, who also have a game in hand.

Arsenal finished second to Manchester City in each of the previous two seasons and Rice wants to end their status as nearly men. "Hopefully the new year brings trophies — we've been pushing for that. To make the next step to be amongst the elite, you have to win stuff," the England midfielder said.

Carlsen quits world chess event over jeans row

AGENCIES @ Paris

CHESS number one Magnus Carlsen has quit a World Championship event in New York after being fined and threatened with exclusion for breaching the dress code by wearing jeans. Carlsen was asked to change his clothes Friday at the World Rapid and Blitz Chess Championships after falling foul of the governing body's regulations. The chess federation (FIDE) said Carlsen rejected the opportunity to switch out of his jeans and was issued a fine of $200.

In a statement, FIDE said its rules "are designed to ensure professionalism and fairness for all participants".

The reigning rapid and blitz world champ said: "I put on a shirt, jacket and honestly like I didn't even think about jeans, even changed my shoes. First of all, I got a fine which is fine, and then I got a warning that I would not be paired if I didn't go change my clothes. They said that I could do it after the third round today."

Arjun in joint lead

Meanwhile, Indian Grandmaster Arjun Erigaisi emerged as one of the four co-leaders after another impressive day of skill display at the aforementioned meet. Russians Volodar Murzin and Alexander Grischuk along with Duda Jan-Kryzstof of Poland share the lead with Arjun.

EXPRESS READ

Delhi SG Pipers beat Goansika in shootout

ROURKELA: Delhi SG Pipers fought back against Gonasika, beating their rivals 4-2 in a shoot-out after Hockey India League (HIL) opener ended 2-2 at the end of time. Tomas Domene scored two for Delhi, while Struan Walker and Victor Charlet (35th) were on mark.

Vijay Hazare: Ishant shines for Delhi

HYDERABAD: Former India pacer Ishant Sharma (3/48) was the chief wicket-taker as Delhi beat Kerala by 29 runs in a Group E match of the Vijay Hazare Trophy in Hyderabad. Delhi made 258 for five, but managed to skittle their Southern rivals for 229.

Haryana Steelers vs Patna Pirates for title

PUNE: Haryana Steelers and Patna Pirates will meet in the final of the PKL Season 11 at the Shree Shiv Chhatrapati Sports Complex, here on Sunday. Steelers are seeking their maiden title while Pirates will be looking to capture their fourth crown.

Riding the wave of 2023, the year 2024 saw a visible rise in interest in women's sports with attendance at venues multiplying and endorsements also climbing. That trend is expected to continue in the upcoming year, writes Kalyani Mangale

Rise of women sports in country, in crowd and in spirit

IT was the semifinal day of the 2024 Women's Asian Champions Trophy in Rajgir. Conventionally speaking, Bihar is not known for anything related to the sport. Odisha, followed by Jharkhand, and to a certain extent Chennai have come to be known as the centers of hockey when it comes to hosting in recent times. However, the roar the crowd let out when the ground announcer started introducing the Indian players at the Rajgir Sports Complex in late November would tell you that the state of Bihar had embraced the sport like never before.

It is not just hockey, women's sports in India are slowly and steadily gaining the imagination of people. The crowd at various sporting events are an indication of what is to unfold in the coming years.

Female athletes, who have played in front of empty chairs in the not-so-distant past, feel this is one of those watershed moments they never thought they would witness in their careers. Take Harmanpreet Kaur, for example, current captain of the national side played in the 2013 ODI World Cup hosted in India. The fixtures were played across two cities, Mumbai and Cuttack, on five grounds. Despite Wankhede Stadium being within walking distance, the Indian team played their matches at the Cricket Club of India's Brabourne Stadium. The final of the ICC event was played at the same venue with empty stands and minimum fanfare.

Ten years later, in March 2023, Kaur led Mumbai Indians to their title in the inaugural season of the Women's Premier League at the same venue in front of a packed house. When the season expanded in two cities in the 2024 edition, the two iconic venues M Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru and Arun Jaitley Stadium in New Delhi showcased their love for the game. Royal Challengers Bengaluru's final home game of the season fetched a crowd of over 26k spectators at the Chinnaswamy Stadium, while the final of the competition saw close to 30k loud audience in New Delhi. One must notice that these were the ticketed matches and even though the prices of those tickets were not as high as their men's counterpart competitions are, still spectators were ready to pay some amount of money to watch these fixtures. Apart from adding to the marketability of women's sports and athletes, these increased numbers have also motivated the players and put a different challenge in front of them. The crowd has well and truly made a difference for the teams in crucial events. India's hockey captain Salima Tete who played in Rajgir admits to the same. "The international hockey tournament was happening in Bihar for the first time, and it was a great experience for us as a team. We didn't expect that much crowd, but they were there to support India. I think it gives you added motivation, especially since these many Hockey admirers were on the ground to watch us play," she told this daily.

Other than the attendance at the ground, viewing numbers over TV and OTT platforms have skyrocketed over the years. The 39% increase in the Dedicated Global Audience views in the 2024 edition of WPL is one of the biggest indications of that. While there is no gender-specific data available, with over 17 crore viewers tuning in across digital and linear platforms, the 2024 Paris edition was the most-watched Olympic Games in India's history. That could be a watershed moment for many sports going forward. The trends we are currently witnessing in India are in line with the revolution many sports are witnessing all over the World. Almost two million fans attended the Women's World Cup in Australia and New Zealand - up by more than 600,000 from the previous record. Elsewhere in the USA, The average attendance for the 2024 Women's National Basketball League season was 9,807, the highest in 22 years - a 48% increase from the previous season. The league also witnessed 154 sellout games in 2024, which was a 242% increase from the 2023 season. What has made this growth possible is the dedicated investments in the sport, giving players the facilities to show their talent and at the same time, making the sports-watching experiences spectator-friendly. Indian authorities can take a leaf out of these leagues going forward. One has to admit the appetite for all things women's sports has increased in 2024 and things can only get better from here.

While we march into 2025 with more hope for increased participation and returns in women's sports, multiple issues still need to be worked on. Women's leadership in sports is critical to driving investment and improved sports policy related to gender equality objectives. There are still significant gaps in pay, prize money, and sponsorship deals parity.

Full story: newindianexpress.com

WHO IS MOHAMMED AL-BASHIR?

Interim prime minister Mohammed al-Bashir, the face of the caretaker government, is a technocrat who headed the HTS-run Syrian Salvation Government in Idlib, a province in northwest Syria. Al-Bashir is an engineer with a background in project management and administrative planning – all of which will help him run the country in the interim

MOHAMMED AL-BASHIR

Born in Idlib province, Bashir graduated in electrical engineering from the University of Aleppo in 2007. He worked for the state-owned Syrian Gas Company, and after the start of the Syrian uprising in March 2011, was director of an institution providing education to children affected by the conflict. In 2021, he obtained a second degree in Sharia and Law from Idlib University.

2021

He first emerged as a minister in the HTS-backed Salvation government in 2021. For two years, he served as the head of development and humanitarian affairs.

IN JANUARY, 2024, WAS ELECTED THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE SSG IN IDLIB.

JOLANI TO SHARAA

ABU MOHD AL-JOLANI

Abu Mohammed al-Jolani, head of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), was in 2011 handpicked by IS chief Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi as the leader of the outfit's Syrian offshoot Jabhat al-Nusra. Jolani later changed tactics, distanced himself from IS and Al-Qaeda, adopted the name Ahmed al-Sharaa, floated HTS, and projected it as part of the legitimate Syrian opposition. After Assad fled, he became the new ruler of Syria

UNRAVELLING THE GEOPOLITICAL GAME PLAYING OUT IN SYRIA

After Bashar al-Assad's sudden abdication, the balance of power shifted from Iran and Russia to the US, which is overtly in dialogue with the militia that is in power. Much would depend on president-elect Donald Trump's interest in building on the strategic advantage it currently appears to hold

T K VINEETH @ Kochi

WHEN news broke on December 8 on the sudden collapse of Syria's Bashar al-Assad regime, even veteran West Asian watchers were aghast.

For, Assad's abdication came barely 12 days after a motley mix of rebel groups led by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) launched an offensive against the powerful autocrat. Assad, who ruled the country with an iron fist for 24 years, was hitherto considered invincible. The last time he faced a real threat of being toppled was in 2011 at the height of 'Arab Spring' – a series of pro-democracy uprisings against autocratic Muslim regimes in west Asian and north African regions. But Assad crushed the unrest by unleashing a reign of terror on protesters, torturing and killing thousands, many of them civilians.

Russia and Iran supported him, offering political and military counterweight against the Western game to inject democracy by force. Russia, as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, used its veto power to shield the Assad regime from sanctions. Iran's Shia theocratic regime entrusted Hezbollah to support Assad – who belongs to the minority Alawite sect of Shia Islam – to cling on to power in a Sunni-majority country. Given Assad's brutal control over the seat of power in his war-torn nation, experts found the news of a lightning rebel advancement resulting in his ouster a bit incredulous. As Kremlin spokesman Dimitry Peskov put it: "What happened surprised the whole world, and we are no exception here."

24-year rule crumble in 12 days?

By design or coincidence, the regime change happened in less than a fortnight. The rebels' blitzkrieg started on November 27 from the western districts of Aleppo. In the intense fighting that followed, dozens of casualties were reported from both sides but the rebels eventually seized several villages as well as some strategic towns, including Base 46, the largest Syrian regime army base in the region. In just three days, the rebel fighters advanced to the city of Aleppo, which is Syria's second largest with two million residents, and captured it in a lightning-fast offensive. This was a turning point as it was the first time the rebels managed to set foot in the city since the 2016 battle in which government forces took control of the city.

The next in line to fall was Hama, which has a strategic location from a military point of view because it lies in west-central Syria providing direct supply lines between Damascus and Aleppo.

Dara, the birthplace of the 2011 uprising, and Homs fell over the next two days. Finally, on December 8, Damascus came under the control of rebel groups. What was conspicuous was the absence of resistance from Assad's forces as the rebels advanced and took control of key cities. It was as if Assad's troops were advised to acquiesce without trying to put up a fight. By the time the rebels entered the Syrian capital, Assad had fled, reportedly under Russian orders. He is said to be in Moscow now along with his family.

While there are too many invariables to the Syrian puzzle, the primary reason the rebels' onslaught succeeded seems to be the lack of military support from Russia and Iran, as the two countries were mired in wars of their own making. Russia is locked in a costly, complicated and protracted war with Ukraine while Iran is nursing losses after it was boxed into a corner by Israel, which crippled Tehran's proxies Hamas in Palestine and Hezbollah in Lebanon, and is now fixated on the last of Iran-backed groups, the Houthis of Yemen. So, the central nervous system of the Assad regime failed to get energy infusion from both Iran and Russia.

Iran, the biggest loser

For almost four decades, Syria served as Iran's central command base in the region, which is strategically crucial for Iran's axis of resistance. Iran enjoyed seamless access to Syrian territory, shipping ports and airports – as if Syria was a province of Iran. Tehran controlled military bases, missile factories, tunnels and warehouses that served the supply chain for its network of militants spread across the region and beyond. From Syria, Iran was able to funnel weapons, cash and logistical support to Hezbollah in Lebanon, Hamas in Gaza, and other militants in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Iraq.

With the fall of its ally in Syria, Iran is probably the biggest loser in the geopolitical game that is still playing out. Assad's removal also marks the collapse of a regional axis which Tehran had been painstakingly building and nurturing over several years, with the strategic support of Moscow. Losing the vital Syrian corridor is a serious blow to Iran's ability to service its proxies. Iran's axis of resistance spectacularly caved, though supporters believe Tehran will be able to regroup with the help of its still-functional proxies in Iraq and Yemen.

Is it really a setback for Russia?

Russia is heavily invested in Syria, where it has set up two of its only military outposts outside the former Soviet Union. The Tartus naval base and Khmeimim air base in Syria have been key to the Kremlin's operations in Africa and West Asia. Assad's unexpected fall has dealt a body blow to Russia's influence in the region. For now, Russia has withdrawn its military assets from them though it claims it is not abandoning the bases. Moscow will now have to recalibrate its strategies, which will largely depend on HTS' stand.

Meanwhile, reports in some Russian media outlets claim the Russians are negotiating with the leaders of HTS to have its Syrian military bases intact. Curiously, the outfit has not yet formally asked Moscow to pack up and withdraw.

Despite the poor optics, Russia chose to play down its loss in Syria and signalled it is willing to work with the new authorities. After a studied silence, this is what Putin said: "On the whole, we have achieved our goal. It is not for nothing that today many European countries and the United States want to establish relations with them (Syria's new rulers). If they are terrorist organisations, why are you (the West) going there? So that means they have changed.... You want to portray everything that is happening in Syria as some kind of failure, a defeat for Russia. I assure you, it is not. And I'll tell you why. We came to Syria 10 years ago to prevent a terrorist enclave from being created there."

Turkish games

Turkey is perhaps the biggest stakeholder in the regime change. It currently hosts about 3.5 million Syrian refugees and is keen to see normalcy return so as to send the Syrians back. Ankara, however, is expected to seek greater control over northern Syria, which it already occupies. Turkey controls a sizable chunk of northern Syria, which it calls 'security zone', with the help of the Syrian National Army, an Islamist militia supported by Ankara.

Turkey, which reportedly provided weapons and logistics support to the rebels for the latest offensive, is now actively negotiating to seal trade pacts. Days after the HTS took over Damascus, Turkish transport minister Abdulkadir Uraloglu said Turkey was ready to strike a maritime demarcation agreement after a permanent government is formed in Damascus. Such an agreement under international law will set the tone for formal exploration of oil and hydrocarbons.

Behind Turkey's alacrity to support the HTS is its unease with Kurdish militants on its border. Turkey considers the Kurdish YPG militia as an extension of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), which has been waging insurgent warfare against the Turkish state since 1984. Complicating matters, the Kurdish YPG is an offshoot of US-allied Syrian Democratic Forces. The US has been playing deaf to Turkey's demand to stop funding YPG. Experts say Turkey's ultimate goal is to topple the Kurdish Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria, where the Democratic Union Party, an offshoot of PKK, is in control.

Without mincing words, Turkish president Tayyip Erdogan said last week that Kurdish militants in Syria will have to lay down their weapons or "be ready to be buried". According to Ankara, the Kurdish YPG militia has no place in Syria's future. How it will play out will depend on the response of the US and HTS.

By proactively responding to developments in Syria and engaging with the new players there, Turkey wants to take Iran's place in the country. It is also likely to lead the reconstruction efforts that are likely to start after the new rulers settle down.

US unable to hide footprints

The timing of the attack on the Assad regime by the rebels in Syria shows military precision and advance intelligence about enemy positions and troop strength, leaving enough hints about support from a major foreign power. For context, the US Secretary of State Antony Blinken revealed that Washington was in 'direct contact' with HTS, formerly known as Jabhat al-Nusra, an al-Qaeda outfit proscribed as a terrorist organisation by the US government.

Not just that, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Barbara Leaf said on record that the Joe Biden administration has decided to lift the $10 million bounty it had announced for information about HTS chief Ahmed al-Sharaa, also known as Abu Mohammad al-Jolani.

The US wouldn't comment on it but unconfirmed reports suggest the HTS cadre received training by US forces while weapons were sent to them through Turkey. No wonder, many observers see US imprints all over Assad's fall. Of particular interest is the fact that HTS was never targeted by the US or its staunch ally Israel even though the latter unleashed hundreds of air strikes inside Syria after Assad's removal. Intriguingly, HTS hasn't said a word against Israel's aggression in Syria, including its pushing deep into the buffer zone of Golan Heights, Syria's tallest mountain range that is extremely critical for military operations.

As for the US, it is still keeping its limited number of forces – around 900 – to protect some northeastern oil fields, centred around the Syrian cities of Hasaka and Deir Ezzor, though the proceeds from the oil trade is pocketed by the Kurdish forces that control the region. The US support for the Kurds remains a thorn in its equation with Turkey.

Perfect cover for Israel

For Israel, the regime change could offer a tactical advantage as it considerably weakened Iran's influence over Syria, from where Tehran used to target Tel Aviv through its proxies spread across the region. Moving fast, Israel launched hundreds of airstrikes inside Syria to kill its air force and naval capabilities. Reports say entire squadrons of fighter jets, radar and missile systems, and weapons depots, including chemical arms, were destroyed. Among the demolished military assets were six Soviet-era missile ships.

For the record, the Israeli government said that its intent was to stop extremists from accessing the deadly weapons which could be used to target Israel. To top it all, Israeli forces pushed deeper into a 155 square mile 'demilitarised buffer zone' established after the 1973 Arab-Israeli war located east of the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights.

The new situation gave Israel the perfect excuse for its territorial aggression. Israel does not believe HTS will adopt a confrontationist approach towards it in the short term, though the Islamist outfit is keeping its cards close to its chest.

What happens now

Despite the establishment of an interim government, there are concerns about internal divisions among various factions. The coalition led by HTS comprises elements ranging from hardcore Salafists to Syrian nationalists in the Free Syrian Army. The political and religious differences within the rebel coalition could lead to limited skirmishes or another civil war. To avoid that, HTS leaders will have to strike power-sharing agreements with the other players.

Apart from HTS, the other prominent players in the region who were trying to dislodge Assad include Islamic State, Kurdish-dominated Syrian Democratic Forces, and the Turkey-backed Syrian National Army. HTS' success in governing will depend, to a large extent, on how it will manage these battle-hardened militant groups. It already has a problem at hand as Turkey has given an ultimatum to the Kurds to stand down and disband their outfits.

Syria is in churn with multiple actors fancying their chances though the US appears to be on the ascendant. Much would depend on president-elect Donald Trump's interest in taking the strategic advantage forward. Which way Syria would eventually swing and whether it would give room for parasites like Al-Qaeda and Islamic State to breed and multiply, only time can tell.

WHAT IS HTS AND HOW IS IT FUNDED?

Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, or HTS, was originally established in 2011 with the name of Jabhat al-Nusra, as a branch of Al-Qaeda in Syria. It quickly became one of the most formidable factions fighting against the Assad regime. The outfit's 'rebranding' happened in 2014 after its leader Abu Muhammad al-Jawlani severed ties with Al-Qaeda and disbanded Jabhat al-Nusra. In January 2017, HTS was officially formed through a merger of several armed factions with the common agenda of working to overthrow the Assad regime.

HTS is an Islamic jihadist organisation that wants to establish a government based on a strict interpretation of Islamic law. However, of late, it has started trying to paint itself as a political outfit accommodative of all sections of people.

It already has experience in administration as it controls the Idlib Province in northwest Syria, where it has become the most powerful military faction among opposition groups. HTS established what it calls the Syrian Salvation Government in Idlib, which functions as an alternative governance structure recognized by other opposition groups. This government comprises various ministries aimed at providing essential services to the population. It raises money by levying taxes in its power base of Idlib, and by running a key border crossing there with Turkey. It also gets remittances from wealthy Syrians who are settled abroad. HTS may have also benefited indirectly from Turkish, Israeli and US support for other anti-Assad rebel groups.

INTERIM GOVERNMENT

1 After toppling the Assad regime, HTS leader and commander-in-chief of the new administration, Ahmed al-Sharaa appointed Mohammed al-Bashir to lead a caretaker government as prime minister until March 1

2 The interim government's initial focus will be to ensure justice and accountability, economic recovery and national security. It plans to set up special tribunals to try those it believes are responsible for grave crimes during Assad's rule

3 Next, it will identify avenues to raise emergency funds to ensure salaries to public servants and to rebuild infrastructure. And lastly, it will try to rebuild the military apparatus to protect its territory

For the time being, HTS' ministers in Idlib would take over the national portfolios. The current ministerial lineup is:

- Minister of Interior Mohammed Abdul Rahman
- Minister of Economy and Resources Basel Abdul Aziz
- Minister of Information Muhammad Yaqoub al-Omar
- Minister of Justice Shadi Muhammad al-Waisi
- Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation Mohamed Taha al-Ahmad
- Minister of Health Mazen Dukhan
- Minister of Development Fadi al-Qassem
- Minister of Local Administration and Services Mohamed Abdel Rahman Muslim
- Minister of Endowments Hussam Haj Hussein
- Minister of Education Nazir al-Qadri
- Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Abdel Moneim Abdel Hafez